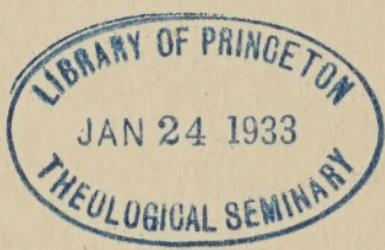


THE
LOST BIBLE
—
MINOR C. MILLER



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THE LOST BIBLE

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THE LOST BIBLE

By
MINOR C. MILLER

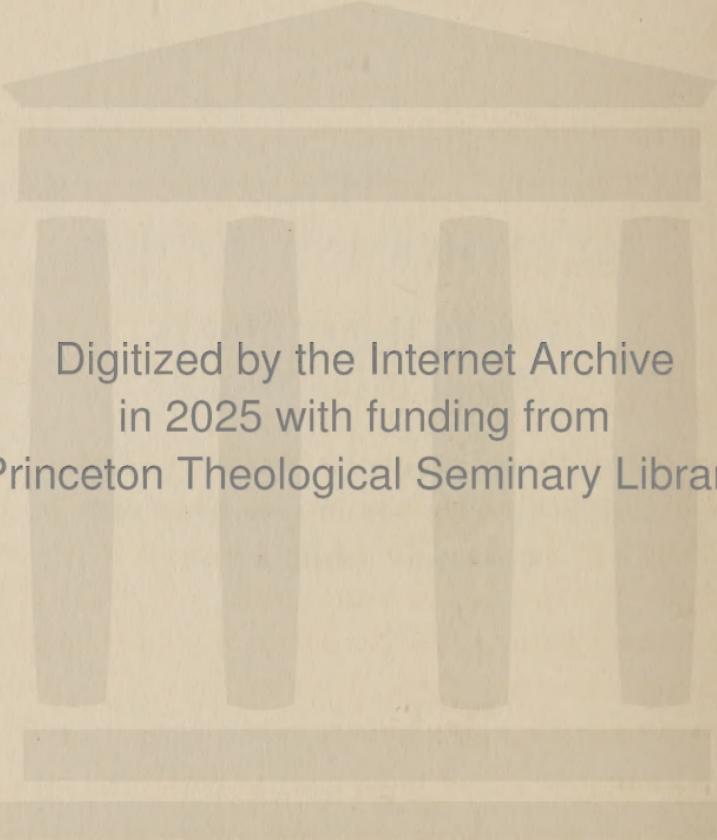


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By
MINOR C. MILLER

TO
MY FATHER AND MOTHER
SAMUEL DANIEL MILLER
MINNIE CLINE MILLER

MY FIRST TEACHERS WHOSE DEVO-
TION TO THE BIBLE HAS BEEN MY
CONSTANT INSPIRATION



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INTRODUCTION

AT THE close of a busy day one is sometimes surprised at the multiplicity of events that has passed in review during the day. When the events in an individual lifetime are added together, and to these, those of a generation, a century, and a millennium, the number is incredibly large and even incomprehensible. It is the task of history to record at least major happenings, but these can be understood far better when other details are filled in to give perspective.

In the present volume a wealth of material seldom touched in a hurried historical survey is developed to further illuminate a past from which guidance for the future must come. If it be true that human nature changes little, the past should be drawn on even more generously as a helpful pilot to the rising generation.

The adults of the present are the spiritual parents of those who will immediately succeed them. If such responsibilities will be taken seriously the message of Professor Miller's book will serve as a new challenge in the fulfillment of these responsibilities. The crowding activities of each

day for most individuals make it impossible to be careful students of history. Hence, the timeliness of this contribution.

There have been times when the Bible was made a fetish; a stone would do equally well perhaps. The efficacy of the Bible lies solely in its message, as Professor Miller says. Any reasonably certain methods of securing acceptance of this message are worthy of consideration. The best methods to this end that have yet been devised are set forth persuasively in this volume. Their acceptance in the past always brought fruitful changes in the social order and their general acceptance today ought to prepare for a new day ahead. Betterments tomorrow rest with today.

WILLIAM T. SANGER

Richmond, Virginia

May 7, 1932

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

THE Bible has brought untold blessings to the world. It has brought man face to face with his Maker. There is no other book like it. On every page God speaks to his children and, whenever his children have been able to hear the message, they have responded in character more nearly in harmony with the eternal principles set forth in the Bible.

The writer believes it can be shown that the influence of the Bible in individual and national life has been determined primarily by education. There have been many long periods when the central message of the Bible has been lost, and lost always because of the failure of education. At other times, by means of thorough and systematic education, the Bible has produced changes which have profoundly affected the thought and life of whole nations and continents. Its message must be true, for nothing but the truth would produce such results.

The title, *The Lost Bible*, as used throughout the book, refers always to the Christian Message. We are not thinking of the Bible as a book, but of

its message. We consider that its message is true and that it is just as applicable to the problems and needs of the twentieth century as it ever was in any age of the past. The problems and needs of the present day are so numerous and so complex that we do not like to contemplate the result if the influence of the Bible should be lost. Protestants should face conditions squarely. The influence of the Bible will certainly be lost to all those who have never been taught to appreciate its message.

What is the purpose of this book? The author hopes that it will stimulate thought; that ministers and laymen will begin anew to study the influence of the Bible in our civilization; and that many people will be fully convinced of the transforming power of education in individual and national life. He hopes church leaders will note the reversal of emphasis in education which has taken place during the last two centuries and that they may take proper steps to give religious education a larger place in the program of the church. Even if a few people are led to do any one of these things, the purpose of the book will have been accomplished.

I desire to express grateful appreciation to the publishers for permission to quote from their

materials: to Dr. William T. Sanger, who has prepared the Introduction; to Dr. A. L. Bennett, Dr. Charles H. Huffman, and Miss Mary O. Miller, who have read the manuscript; and to Miss Alda Shipman for generous aid in arranging the bibliography and in copying the material.

MINOR C. MILLER

Bridgewater, Virginia

May 1, 1932.

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CHAPTER I

The Bible Conquers Paganism

WHEN Jesus, the Christ, was in the world, he had much to say about the progress and ultimate triumph of his kingdom. On one occasion he compared the growth of the kingdom to the growth of a grain of mustard seed, and at another time stated plainly that the power and influence of the kingdom in the world is comparable to the influence and working of leaven in a small quantity of meal. His every reference to the kingdom, as recorded in the New Testament, seems to convey the idea that he expected progress—a growing, conquering, triumphant progress of kingdom principles in the lives of his followers.

The message of Jesus had been simply this: *God is your loving Father and all men are brothers.* This was a new idea. Certain Hebrew prophets had referred to the Fatherhood of God, and Confucius, Plato, Aristotle, and others, had spoken of brotherhood, but the idea of universal brotherhood, rooted and grounded in the Fatherhood of God, had never before been taught. Truly, and with no ground at all for dispute, the

first teachers of Christianity soon discovered that the new kingdom would have to be established upon the basis of a civilization almost wholly hostile and antagonistic to its basic principles.

The principles and ideals of Jesus, which were later incorporated in the Christian Bible, were carried by faithful teachers to every part of the Roman world. It was a bold venture, but these first teachers had been so inspired by their great Master Teacher that they went out as crusaders and conquerors in the confident expectation that the Truth in the hearts of men would make them free. Nor were they disappointed, for many of those first Christian teachers lived long enough to see paganism tremble and yield to the purifying and lofty ideals of the Gospel of Christ.

Christian teachers of the twentieth century may well turn their minds backward to the first century —to the very day when Jesus said, “Go ye therefore and teach”— and try to picture vividly the conditions of the world into which the first disciples were commanded to go as teachers of the new religion. What was the nature and magnitude of the task to be undertaken by these first Christian teachers and how did the pagan world respond to the inspiring ideals of the Christ?

CORRUPT POLYTHEISM

The religion of the Roman Empire was purely polytheistic. Every town and city had its particular gods and goddesses. These divinities were exceedingly corrupt, and when the people worshipped their gods they paid homage and reverence to every vice and immoral practice known to them. Indeed, it may be said that the gods and goddesses were regarded as the source of the vices which the people practiced. Cardinal Gibbons describes the condition thus:

“The heathen gods and goddesses were monsters of iniquity. Jupiter and Bacchus, Mars and Mercury, Venus and Circe, were the patrons of some particular passion. Every vice was canonized in the person of some divinity. Lust and drunkenness, violence and theft, had each its respective patron deity. The Pagans had a religious worship; but unlike the Christian worship, it was not intended to exercise, nor did it exercise, any influence on the morals of the people.”¹

¹ Gibbons, James Cardinal, *Our Christian Heritage*, p. 322 (Baltimore: John Murphy Company, 1889). Used by permission.

The Romans had their temples, their priests, and their complete system of worship, but it was not the purpose of the Roman religion to elevate and purify conduct. The state was supreme, and religion was supposed to promote loyalty to the state through a system of rites and ceremonies designed to profane and debauch the individual. "It is a matter of general notoriety," writes Tertullian, "that the temples are the very places where adulteries are arranged, and procuresses pursue their victims between the altars."² Women were advised by moralists to keep away from the temples so that they might not there be reminded of the immorality of the gods.

The complexity of the system was greatly increased by the practice of emperor worship. When Caesar died he was given divine honors, and temples were everywhere erected in which he was worshipped as a god. This practice was continued during the Empire, and most of the emperors were guilty of about every crime in the catalog of iniquity. Thus it can be seen that the system of polytheism, coupled with emperor worship, en-

² *Ibid.*, p. 323.

couraged in private and public life every abuse of the emperors and immoral gods.

LOW ESTIMATE UPON CHILDHOOD

Jesus had placed the child in the midst, thus proclaiming the glory and beauty of childhood; but the first Christian teachers in the Roman world found a society in which the child counted for little or nothing. Abortion and infanticide were practiced among all classes, and, prior to Christianity, no law was enacted which was powerful enough to materially check these evils.

The Roman father had absolute right over the life and death of his child. When children were not wanted and parents were restrained by the maternal instinct from killing them at birth, they would take them to a convenient place provided for the purpose and leave them to die or to be gathered up by a group of speculators, who fed them until they were of marketable value, and then sold them into slavery or prostitution.

The actual situation will be made clearer by reference to several writers of the time. Tertullian, referring to infanticide, says: "How many are there among you, and they too in the mag-

istry, who put an end to your children! You drown them, or you suffer them to die of cold and hunger, or to be eaten by dogs.”³ Minutius Felix, in an address to the Romans, says: “I see you expose your children to beasts and birds of prey, or even wretchedly choke to death your own offspring.”⁴ It is a most horrible picture, but one that helps us to appreciate the task which confronted those first teachers of Christianity, as they went out to proclaim their new religion to the people of the pagan world.

THE CONDITION OF WOMEN

The condition of women in most nations of the world before the advent of Christianity is vividly described by Cardinal Gibbons:

“The history of women in Pagan countries has been, with rare exceptions, an unbroken record of bondage, oppression, and moral degradation. She had no rights that the husband felt bound to respect She was a mere chattel, marketable at will; nor had she any power to dissolve the marriage without her husband’s consent.”⁵

³ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 349-354.

The legal status of women was modified during the Empire to such an extent that the wife acquired almost complete independence, but the institution of marriage fell into such popular disrespect that the state was compelled to pass laws to induce men to marry. Lecky describes the situation in this manner:

“We find Cicero repudiating his wife Terentia, because he desired a new dowry, Augustus compelling the husband of Livia to repudiate her when she was already pregnant, that he might marry her himself; Cato ceding his wife, with the consent of her father, to his friend Hortensius, and resuming her after his death.”⁶

Men and women married and remarried a number of times. St. Jerome refers to one woman who had married her twenty-third husband. “There is not a woman left,” says Seneca, “who is ashamed of being divorced, now that the most distinguished ladies count their years not by the consuls, but by their husbands.”⁷

⁶ Lecky, W. E. H., *History of European Morals*, vol. ii, pp. 306-307.

⁷ Gibbons, James Cardinal, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

SOCIAL EVILS

The gladiatorial shows for hundreds of years provided the chief source of amusement in the Roman world and perhaps did more to corrupt morals and rob the people of every sense of virtue than any other single influence. Every important city had its arena, and regular shows were staged at which slaves, criminals, and professional gladiators fought in deadly combat for the sheer amusement of the populace. Trajan staged one show which lasted one hundred and twenty-three days, during which period ten thousand men participated. To give novelty and provide new thrills, animals were introduced and made to fight with each other and with men. When the Colosseum was dedicated, five thousand animals were killed in a single day.

Chateaubriand, describing the gladiatorial shows, says: "During the reign of Claudius was exhibited the spectacle of nineteen thousand men slaughtering one another on the lake Fucinus for the amusement of the Roman populace. The combatants, before engaging in the bloody work, saluted the

emperor with these words, 'Hail, Caesar! Those about to die salute thee!' ”⁸

Such spectacles are mentioned only because they show something of the task that confronted the first Christian teachers and for the reason also that they show the depths to which society can fall when there is no adequate conception of God.

When Christianity was born, slavery existed throughout the world. In many cities the slaves far out-numbered the free men. Frequently the slaves were intellectually superior to their masters, but this fact only helped to make slavery more degrading. The master had such absolute power over his slaves that he might kill them at will. The marriage relation was not recognized, and the moral conditions were too horrible to describe.

CHRISTIANITY CONQUERS PAGANISM

The record of the progress of Christianity during the first two or three centuries is a most thrilling story. The brief description here presented of conditions in the Roman world would suggest an almost impossible task, but it was not

⁸ Chateaubriand, Viscount De, *The Genius of Christianity*, p. 672 (Baltimore: John Murphy Company, 1856). Used by permission.

so regarded by those first Christian teachers who had faith in their message and who knew that the truth which they proclaimed was sharper than a two-edged sword. Having observed the method of Jesus, they believed that the application of this same method would enable them to transform Roman civilization in harmony with the principles which Jesus had lived and taught.

The first teachers taught that all human life is sacred. They taught that a child, a woman, or a slave is a child of God. They did not go about their task in a spirit of disloyalty or rebellion against existing conditions, but humbly taught the truth and ideals of Jesus. Silently and gradually paganism began to yield. Tertullian, who was born about 160, says: "We are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you, cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, your very camp, your tribes, companies, palaces, senate, forum. We leave you only your temples."⁹

It is a most interesting study to trace the history of legislation as Christianity begins to make itself felt. Gradually laws were passed mitigating the horrors of slavery and prohibiting or regulating many other abuses which were so far below the

⁹ Gibbons, James Cardinal, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

standards of Christianity. By 313 Christianity had become so powerful that Constantine proclaimed it a legal religion in the Empire. It has been estimated that by this date there were approximately thirty million Christians.

Christian teachers today ought to be thrilled at the opportunity to go and teach the principles of the Bible. The triumphant success of Christianity over paganism ought to give a new confidence in the Christian message and in its ability to meet every situation and solve every problem in individual or national life. Jesus said, "Go Teach," and his disciples and their followers took him seriously. They accomplished such marvelous results that all Christian teachers and church leaders may well afford to trust fully the educational method and enter upon such an educational program as will again win the world to Christ.

CHAPTER II

The Lost Bible in the Middle Ages

THE amazing success of Christianity during the first five centuries of the Christian era may be explained largely by the fact that Christian teachers were always careful to see that all converts to the new faith were rooted and grounded in the truth. Paganism had lost its charm for the masses; hence throughout the Empire there was a ready response to the simple and inspiring message of Jesus. Thousands of people made application to become members of the Christian community, but such requests were granted only after thorough, systematic, and prolonged instruction in the basic principles and practices of the new religion.

EARLY CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Jesus had no disposition to leave his followers in the dark concerning the method of forwarding his kingdom. Early in his ministry, he adopted the teaching method and used it consistently to the end. When his work had been finished and he had taken one last opportunity to personally instruct his disciples in the particular method of

propagating the principles for which he had given his life, Jesus said, "Go ye therefore and teach."

The disciples whom Jesus had inspired and taught took him literally at his word and became teachers. Through their teaching ministry, the principles of the kingdom began to take root and grow. Many New Testament references indicate that the teaching method was recognized in the Apostolic Church. The Gospel of Luke was written to Theophilus that he might fully know the truth of what he had been taught.¹ Paul, on his third missionary journey, found an Alexandrian Jew named Apollos, who was "a man of learning and well versed in the Scriptures." The record shows that this man "had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and, being full of burning zeal, he used to speak and teach accurately the facts about Jesus."²

The church, in the midst of pagan society, soon found it necessary to establish a definite system of instruction for those contemplating membership in the Christian community. Accordingly, a program of catechumenal or elementary instruction was started and catechumen schools flourished in

¹ Weymouth, *New Testament in Modern Speech*, Luke 1:4.

² *Ibid.*, Acts 18:24-25.

Italy and in other parts of the continent until the time of the Barbarian Invasion.

The chief function of these early schools, according to Cubberley, was "the moral regeneration of society through the moral regeneration of converts."³ These schools were held at the church and as described by Graves, "consisted in moral and religious teachings, reading, and memorizing the Scriptures, together with some training in early psalmody."⁴ Classes were held daily or at regular periods during the week. At first only adults were enrolled but as time went on children of believers were admitted and received instruction in religion in preparation for church membership. Jews and pagans were enrolled on an equal basis. Many of the church fathers received their first religious instruction in these schools, and, like Apollos, became filled with burning zeal for the cause of Christ and went out as teachers in obedience to the command of their Master.

The following description of catechumenal instruction from the Apostolic Constitutions, as

³ Cubberley, Ellwood P., *The History of Education*, p. 92 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1920) Used by permission.

⁴ Graves, Frank Pierrepont, *A Student's History of Education*, p. 44 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1915). Used by permission.

quoted by Cubberley, gives a fairly good idea of the aim and purpose of these first Christian schools.

“Let him, therefore, who is to be taught the truth in regard to piety be instructed before his baptism in the knowledge of the unbegotten God, in the understanding of his only begotten Son, in the assured acknowledgement of the Holy Ghost. Let him learn the order of the several parts of the creation, the series of providence, the different dispensations of the laws. Let him be instructed how the world was made, and why man was appointed to be a citizen therein; let him also know his own nature, of what sort it is; let him be taught how God punished the wicked with water and fire, and did glorify the saints in every generation—I mean Seth, and Enos, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham and his posterity, and Melchizedek, and Job, and Moses, and Joshua, and Caleb, and Phineas the priest, and those that were holy in every generation Let him that offers himself to baptism learn these and the like things during the time that he is a catechumen in hopes of a glorious communication, he may be mortified to sin, and may live to God, as to his mind, and word, and deed, and may be

numbered together in the book of the living.”⁵

CHRISTIAN TEACHING PRODUCES GOOD RESULTS

The religious and moral instruction in the catechumen schools and in the homes of the Christians produced marvelous results. The Christians, in their daily living, presented a marked contrast to their neighbors, who continued to worship the pagan gods. Justin Martyr, describing the conduct of the early Christians, writes:

“We who formerly delighted in fornication now strive for purity. We who used magical arts have dedicated ourselves to the good and eternal God. We who loved the acquisition of wealth more than all else, now bring what we have into a common stock, and give to every one in need. We who hated and destroyed one another, and on account of their different manners would not receive into our houses men of a different tribe, now, since the coming of Christ, live familiarly with them. We pray for our enemies, we endeavor to persuade those who hate us unjustly to live conformably to the beautiful

⁵ Cubberley Ellwood P., *Readings in the History of Education*, pp. 52-53 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920). Used by permission.

precepts of Christ, to the end that they may become partakers with us of the same joyful hope of a reward from God, the Ruler of all.”⁶

Lecky, commenting on the splendid lives of the Christians, remarks: “There can, indeed, be little doubt that, for nearly two hundred years after its establishment in Europe, the Christian community exhibited a moral purity which, if it has been equalled, has never for any long period been surpassed.”⁷

CHRISTIANITY FACES DIFFICULTIES

A study of the growth and prosperity of the church during the first two hundred years of its history would not suggest the perils which Christianity had to face in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. A brief survey of this long and troublesome period will help us see how the Bible became a lost Book and how the church, having lost its source of light and inspiration, entered

⁶ *First Apology*, From *Christianity's Contribution to Civilization*, p. 17, Charles D. Eldridge. Copyright 1928. Used by permission of the Publishers Cokesbury Press.

⁷ Lecky, W. E. H., *History of European Morals*, vol. ii, p. 11.

upon a long period of stagnation and decay, which lasted more than a thousand years.

Roman persecution began in the first century but it may be said truthfully that there was actually no general effort on the part of the government to exterminate Christianity until about the middle of the third century. Christianity then became illegal and anyone professing to be a Christian or suspected of having anything to do with Christians was guilty of violation of law and subjected to the severest penalties.

The chief attacks were directed against the Bible. It became illegal for a person to possess any portion of the scriptures or any other Christian literature. It is remarkable how Christians remained true to their convictions and clung to the Bible throughout the long period of persecution. In most instances they exemplified the finest Christian loyalty, and there is abundant testimony concerning the sincerity of their faith. It is certainly true, however, that such troublesome times were not conducive to the development of education through the splendid Christian schools which had flourished in earlier years. It seems reasonable to conclude that the opposition of the Roman government to the early church was especially ef-

fective because it interfered with the orderly program of education and made it difficult for members to be properly instructed in the principles of the Christian faith.

It has been significantly suggested that the first three centuries of the Christian era give us a history of the church in the world, while the next twelve centuries give a history of the world in the church. By the Edict of Milan in 313, Christianity became a legal religion and at the accession of Theodosius in 376, it was recognized as the only legal religion in the Empire. Soon it became very popular for people to join the church, and thousands of pagans eagerly sought admission. In 380 Christianity was made compulsory, but the result of this act brought more pagans into the church and further corrupted the purity of the faith.

The entire procedure of admitting converts was now radically changed. The early Christian schools had been gradually abandoned, for it was beyond the resources of the church to instruct converts as had been the practice in former years after such wholesale methods were employed for admitting people into the church. The new members brought with them most of the vices of

paganism. They knew nothing of the exalted principles of Christian living as had been taught and practiced by Jesus. The church became corrupt and paganized because of the overwhelming number of people who knew little and cared less about God or religion, as a way of life. They had no basis upon which to build a Christian character. They were pagans, ignorant of everything Christian. They had joined the church on a wave of popular enthusiasm because Christianity now enjoyed the prestige and favor of Imperial Rome.

THE BARBARIAN INVASION

While the Roman government was inflicting such terrible persecution upon the church near the close of the third century, barbarian hordes were hammering away on the borders of the Empire. In 378 the Visigoths were victorious over the Romans in the Battle of Adrianople, which proved to be a turning point in the struggle and marked the beginning of the conquest of the Empire by the barbarians.⁸

In 410 Alaric sacked Rome and in 476 the

⁸ See Robinson, James Harvey, *The Ordeal of Civilization*, p. 31 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1926).

Roman government in the west came to an end. The powerful barbarian tribes from the north of Europe continued to take possession of the country as they swept everything before them. St. Jerome, writing in 411, refers thus to the invasion:

“For twenty years all the land from Constantinople to the Julian Alps are drenched in Roman blood. The provinces are a prey to Alans, Huns, Vandals, and Marcomanni. Matrons and virgins devoted to God, the noble and the priest, are made a sport of these monsters. The churches are demolished; the bones of the martyrs are dug up; horses are stabled at the altars of Christ. ‘The Roman world is sinking in ruin’”⁹

THE DARK AGE BEGINS

The Barbarian Invasion is doubly significant in this discussion because it brought to an end the culture of the once proud Roman Empire and made impossible the continuance of Christian schools, which had flourished in the early church. The ignorance, confusion, and superstition, which prevailed from 500 to 1500 is beyond description. There is abundant evidence to indicate that the

⁹ Cubberley, Ellwood P., *op. cit.*, p. 68.

failure of education was largely responsible for this dark period in history.

“Between the time of Theodoric and that of Charlemagne three hundred years elapsed, during which scarcely a person was to be found who could write out, even in the worst of Latin, an account of the events of his day. Everything conspired to discourage education. The great centers of learning—Carthage, Rome, Alexandria, Milan—had all been partially destroyed by the invaders. The libraries which had been kept in the temples of the pagan gods were often burned, along with the temples themselves, by Christian enthusiasts, who were not sorry to see the heathen books disappear with the heathen religion. Shortly after Theodoric’s death the emperor at Constantinople withdrew the support which the Roman government had been accustomed to grant to public teachers, and closed the great school at Athens. The only important historian of the sixth century was the half-illiterate Gregory, bishop of Tours (d. 594), whose whole work is evidence of the sad state of affairs. He at least heartily appreciated his own ignorance and exclaims, in bad Latin, ‘Woe to our time, for

the study of books has perished from among us.' ”¹⁰

Charlemagne, (800), himself a friend and patron of education, but unable to write, urged the establishment of schools because he was shocked at the abuses heaped upon the people by an illiterate clergy. The following discloses typical eighth century conditions.

“The majority of its priests were runaway slaves or criminals Its bishoprics were regarded as private estates, and were openly sold to the highest bidder The archbishop of Rouen could not read; his brother of Treves had never been ordained Drunkenness and adultery were among the lesser vices of a clergy that had become rotten to the core.”¹¹

This is the kind of picture which might be expected to follow such wide spread mental and spiritual illiteracy. The light did not quite go out, for in the monasteries the candle burned dimly, but for the masses the light went out. The

¹⁰ Robinson, James Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 37. Used by permission.

¹¹ As quoted in Nichols, Robert Hastings, *The Growth of the Christian Church*, vol. i, p. 86 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1917). Used by permission.

Bible, which had been the power and inspiration of the church in the first centuries became a *lost Book*. The manuscripts were not all destroyed, but, due to the failure of education, the influence of the Bible was dead. The people knew nothing about the Bible. They knew no God except the God which was revealed through an illiterate and corrupt priesthood, and they regarded no authority except the authority of an autocratic church.

Truly, the Bible lights the pathway of individuals and of nations. It has always been so, and history records that whenever this light has been allowed to go out or to become obscure, individuals and nations have wandered in the wilderness. The story of Christianity from 500 to 1500 is the story of a *church without a Bible*. It is not the story of an active, growing, conquering kingdom, but a sad story of stagnation and despair, a condition caused by the failure of education and the accompanying failure of the Bible to influence priest or people.

CHAPTER III

The Rediscovery of the Bible

THE church of the Middle Ages was a church without a Bible in the sense that, during this long period, the Bible did not materially influence the life and conduct of the people. The Bible was lost to the masses because of general illiteracy and because of the prevailing view that the Bible was intended only for the clergy. There were Bibles among the clergy, but for long periods even the majority of the clergy were unable to read. Another difficulty was due to the fact that, often through faulty translation by ignorant monks, the spirit and message of the Bible had become so corrupt that its original meaning and function were lost. It is our purpose here to trace those streams of influence during the Middle Ages which culminated in the rediscovery of the Bible at the beginning of the modern period.

THE FIRST SIGNS OF LIGHT

One would be grossly in error to assume that there was nothing good in the civilization of the

Middle Ages. It was an age of terrible illiteracy, and when it is viewed in the light of modern knowledge and culture, we naturally characterize the whole period *the dark ages*. It was a long period of mental and spiritual darkness, but even in the midst of darkness, superstition, and immorality, there appeared on the horizon at infrequent intervals shining lights who refused to accept conditions as they were and who gave their lives that men might be pointed toward the Way, the Truth, and the Light.

One of the first to direct men toward the light was the emperor Charlemagne. In 787 he issued his first general proclamation on education; others followed in quick succession. These documents were, of course, addressed only to the clergy. They were doubtless prepared by Alcuin, whom Charlemagne had employed as his minister of education, but they were signed by the emperor. They express the deepest concern for maintaining the purity of religion and recognize the existence of corruption on account of faulty translation and misinterpretation of the scriptures. To Charlemagne it was a fearful risk for the ignorant clergy to attempt to use the Holy Scriptures. He, therefore, urges all the clergy to live pure lives, and

closes one of his memorable documents with these words:

“And let schools be established in which boys may learn to read. Correct carefully the Psalms, the signs in writing, the songs, the calendar, the grammar, in each monastery or bishopric, and the catholic books; because often some desire to pray to God properly, but they pray badly because of the incorrect books.”¹

The educational work of Charlemagne did not last long. The barbarian invasions were not yet over, and in a few years after the death of Charlemagne western Europe and England were subjected to new invasions which lasted for more than a hundred years. An old record from the *Annals of Saint Vaast*, in 884, shows clearly why education again fell into decay and why it reached almost as low a level as it did before the brief revival of learning.

“The Northmen ceased not to take Christian people captive and kill them, and to destroy churches and houses and burn villages. Through all the streets lay bodies of

¹ As quoted in Cubberley, Ellwood P., *Readings in the History of Education*, p. 91.

the clergy, of laymen, nobles, and others, of women, children, and sucking babes. There was no road or place where the dead did not lie, and all who saw Christian people slaughtered were filled with sorrow and despair.”²

In 1176 Peter Waldo, a rich merchant of Lyons, inquired of a priest concerning “the best way to God.” The priest advised him to become a monk and try to find God through asceticism. Waldo took him at his word and sold his property and gave it to the poor. He then secured a copy of the New Testament, which changed his life. He began to study it and to ponder deeply its meaning. Other men soon joined him, and in a very short time the group began to condemn the corrupt practices of the church and to proclaim the authority of the Bible as superior to the authority of the church.³

Waldo contended that the Bible contained the sole rule of life and belief. He repudiated infant baptism, transubstantiation, prayers for the dead, and other rites of the church. To make his own

² As quoted in Cubberley, Ellwood P., *The History of Education*, p. 146.

³ See Walker, Williston, *A History of the Christian Church*, p. 251.

work more effective, he began to teach the people to read and to distribute among them parts of the Bible translated in their own language. Waldo was not satisfied to believe that God could be found through asceticism or through the performance of external ordinances or ceremonies of any kind. He believed that God could be found through the revelation contained in the Bible; hence he devoted his whole energy to an effort to make the Bible meaningful to the common people. But this was directly opposed to the teachings of the church, which had regarded the Bible as appropriate only for use by the clergy. Almost immediately strict measures were adopted to prevent its use by the laity. In 1199 Pope Innocent III was asked by one of the bishops for advice as to what to do with the Bible readers in his diocese. He replied that it would be sacrilege for a layman to even touch the Bible and that all such offenders should be either stoned or shot through.⁴

The work of Waldo furnished the impetus for a great deal of legislation pertaining to the use of the Bible by the laity. As we approach the later Middle Ages, the prohibitions against reading the

⁴ See Von Dobschutz, Ernst, *The Influence of the Bible on Civilization*, p. 105.

Bible by the laity and against translating the Bible become more frequent and the punishment to be meted out to all such offenders becomes more severe. Waldo was much too early to be able to give the Bible back to the people, but his work was most significant because of the magnificent way in which he pointed the masses toward the true source of light.

JOHN WYCLIFFE TURNS TO THE BIBLE

John Wycliffe was born in England about 1320. He became a teacher in Oxford College and soon rose to prominence. Living at a time when the Pope was making desperate efforts to control the political life of western Europe, Wycliffe strongly opposed the doctrines of the *holy church* as advocated by the Pope and the clergy and he bitterly denounced the interference of the Pope in all civil affairs. He boldly asserted that the church had no authority at all except the authority vested in the Bible. He contended that the Pope and the clergy had so far departed from the teachings and spirit of the Bible that the whole clerical system represented the spirit of anti-Christ.

Wycliffe did more than attack existing conditions in the church. He was so thoroughly con-

vinced that the Bible contained the true revelation of God that he began to consider ways and means for making it available to the common people. Together with several of his associates, he undertook to make an English translation of the New Testament, and by 1384 the translation was complete. This was a monumental work which greatly influenced the development of the English language and which had a corresponding influence on English morals. Many copies were made of this translation, and Wycliffe's poor priests went everywhere teaching the people the truths so recently made available through this first English translation of the New Testament.

It should be remembered, however, that Wycliffe lived before the invention of printing, and hence the circulation of his Bible was limited. It was tedious and expensive to make copies of his translation when all of the material had to be copied in long hand. "A considerable sum was paid for even a few sheets of the manuscript, a load of hay was given for permission to read it for a certain period one hour a day, and those who could not afford even such expense adopted what

means they could."⁵ Certainly Wycliffe had the same vision and spirit which had prompted Waldo and which prompted Luther and Tyndale one hundred and fifty years later. But the spirit of the age was against him. He was bitterly attacked by the Pope and excommunicated from the church. Finally he came to a peaceful end only by reason of the shelter and protection of his influential friends in England.

A FAMOUS EDUCATOR UPHOLDS THE BIBLE

The most famous scholar and critic of existing conditions in the church at the beginning of the sixteenth century was Erasmus. He had studied extensively in Germany, Italy, France, and England, and he had frequently been regarded as a citizen of all Europe. He launched a vigorous attack upon the formalism and the dogma of the church. He was thoroughly convinced that the church of his day was shot through and through with superstition and corruption. In his book, *The Praise of Folly*, he went so far as to make fun of the idea that anyone should expect to obtain

⁵ Smyth, J. Paterson, *How We Got Our Bible*, pp. 75-76 (New York: James Pott and Company, 1930). Used by permission.

salvation or reward through pilgrimages, worship of relics, or through indulgences.

While in England, Erasmus met John Colet and received from him the inspiration to make a careful study of the earliest Christian manuscripts. He began by making a thorough study of the New Testament in the original Greek. He found the original Greek manuscripts so different from the faulty translations in current use in his day and was so impressed by the message of the New Testament that he began to advocate its general reading by the masses as the most effective means of reform. His position is clearly set forth in the following:

“I totally disagree with those who are unwilling that the sacred scriptures, translated into the vulgar tongue, should be read by private individuals, as if Christ had taught such subtle doctrines that they can with difficulty be understood by a very few theologians, or as if the strength of the Christian religion lay in men’s ignorance of it I wish all women even, to read the gospel and the Epistles of Paul. I wish they were translated into all languages of all peoples, I wish that the ploughman might sing parts of them at his plough, and the weaver

at his shuttle, and that the traveller might beguile with their narration the weariness of his way.”⁶

Erasmus published his first edition of the New Testament in Greek in 1516. Prior to this date, all translations of the Bible during the Middle Ages had been made from the old Latin Vulgate, itself a translation. Greek had been practically unknown in Europe for centuries, and now, due to the work of Erasmus and others, “Greece rose from the grave with the New Testament in her hand.”⁷ The translation of the New Testament by Erasmus directed other scholars back to first century Christianity and to the Bible. Hundreds of eager students began to search diligently the scriptures in the original languages, and the more they searched the more they demanded to be free from the superstition and autocracy of the Mediæval church.

LUTHER TRANSLATES THE BIBLE INTO GERMAN

Martin Luther was teaching theology at the University of Wittenberg when the Greek New

⁶ As quoted in Goodspeed, Edgar J., *The Making of the English New Testament*, p. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925). Used by permission.

⁷ As quoted in Smyth, J. Paterson, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

Testament by Erasmus came from the press. He at once recognized this translation as the source of much new and valuable information. He resolved to master the Greek and Hebrew languages so that he might translate the Bible into German from the original.

Luther was well aware of the abuses in the church, but up to this time he had always been loyal to the church and to the Pope. One day he was shocked to learn of the activities of Tetzel, the agent of the Pope, in selling indulgences to the common people in the neighborhood of Wittenberg. This brought home to Luther the evils of the whole clerical system in a way which he had not seen before. He ridiculed the idea that any person should expect to receive pardon for sins by purchasing a certificate of indulgence from the Pope's agent. He boldly gave his reasons for his position and plunged deeper into his studies so that he might be the better able to defend his views on the basis of the authority of the scriptures.

Germany was soon in the midst of revolution. The common people turned naturally to Luther as their leader and defender of their rights against the Pope. Luther had to flee for his life and for a period spent the time in exile in the Castle of

Wartburg. While here, he worked diligently on the New Testament and in the autumn of 1522, there came from the press the first edition of the New Testament in German, translated from the Greek. He then began on the Old Testament and by 1534 the entire Bible had been printed in German.

TYNDALE TRANSLATES THE BIBLE INTO ENGLISH

William Tyndale graduated from Oxford College in 1515. Having been a pupil of Erasmus, he shared fully the views of his great teacher, and boldly asserted that it was pure folly to depend for salvation upon the worship of relics, pilgrimages, or indulgences. He began to teach, as he had been taught, that the Bible contained the sole rule of authority and that the authority of the Bible was always superior to the authority of the bishop or even that of the Pope.

Tyndale was profoundly impressed by the ignorance of the English clergy. He was constantly in argument with some of them in an effort to prove the authority of the Bible superior to the authority of the church. One day, while talking with a group of the clergy, one of them said, "We

had better be without God's laws than the Pope's."⁸ Tyndale became at once indignant and in disgust he uttered his famous challenge. "I defy the Pope," he cried, "and all his laws; and if God spare me I will one day make the boy that drives the plough in England to know more of Scripture than the Pope does."⁹

Tyndale then set himself firmly to the task of translating the New Testament from the Greek into English. His purpose being soon discovered, he had to flee for his life to Germany. It is very probable that he visited Luther and that the two received inspiration from each other as they faithfully struggled toward the accomplishment of the same task. Tyndale worked steadily on at his translation and overcame almost insurmountable difficulties. Finally the work was done, and in 1525 the first printed New Testament in English came from the press. Tyndale immediately took steps to smuggle the books to England, knowing full well the price he would have to pay if he were arrested in the attempt.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

THE BIBLE BECOMES POPULAR

The work of Erasmus, Luther, and Tyndale made the Bible popular in their respective countries. Their translations were much better than any previous ones. Other religious leaders and advocates of reform were inspired by Luther and Tyndale to undertake to make translations of the Bible from the original into the language of the common people in their respective nations; consequently in a short time the common people in every nation of Europe received the printed Bible in their own language.

The Bible had been lost to the masses for more than a thousand years. It had been lost because of the failure of education and now in the midst of a great educational revival the Bible was suddenly rediscovered and given back to the people. During the Middle Ages, the masses in Europe had been led to place supreme authority in the holy church and that church had become exceedingly corrupt. When the sixteenth century dawned, we find that men had grown tired of the formalism and legalism of the church. They were ready to turn from the authority of the *holy church* to the authority of the *Holy Book*.

Its rediscovery was soon to produce a rebirth of the Christian spirit in Europe, such as had not been witnessed since the first Christian teachers had carried its message to the pagan world.

CHAPTER IV

The Bible Wins Its Way in Europe

THE sixteenth century in Europe marked the culmination of a long period of important discoveries. In Italy, during the last half of the fourteenth century, Petrarch and Boccaccio led the way in a restudy and a rediscovery of classic literature. About the same time, other men were making a diligent study of classic art and were being reminded that life had not always been like it was in the Middle Ages. While all this investigation was going on, Johannes Gutenberg and others discovered a way to print books by using movable type. Men, dissatisfied with their knowledge of the world, had plunged into the study of geography and in 1492, Columbus discovered America. It was a most wonderful age but no discovery or invention produced more far reaching results than the rediscovery of the Bible. We are now ready to see how the Bible wins its way in Europe during the first century after its rediscovery.

A NEW SOURCE OF AUTHORITY

Waldo, Wycliffe, Luther, Tyndale, and others had launched their attacks upon the church on the ground of mistaken authority. The long centuries of darkness and superstition had removed the Bible from the thought of the people. There had been perilous times, and, in the midst of peril, the people had depended upon the bishops for protection. For centuries, wild barbarian tribes had swept everything before them, and no power was so effective in stopping their depredations as the awe-inspiring influence of the clergy. Even kings and emperors trembled before the great Popes of the Middle Ages. There came a time when every person belonged to the church and the church controlled every experience of life. The people recognized no other authority, and the agents of the church were considered to be God's divinely appointed messengers to carry out his will and purpose in the world.

The position of the church was finally challenged by a great educational movement. It had required centuries to establish the idea of the supreme authority of the church and so it required centuries to bring about conditions potent enough

to break that authority. The revival of learning developed gradually, and men became anxious to know more about the past. They began to study and to make inquiry. They began to compare conditions around them with conditions in other days. They carried this spirit of investigation into the field of religion and began to compare religious conditions around them with conditions during the early days of Christianity. Men began to think, and finally men began to say it was not so in the beginning, the bolder spirits among them maintaining that it ought not to be so now.

Those earnest students of first-century Christianity turned naturally to Christ, the recognized founder and head of the church. They began to compare his modest and unassuming life with the bigotry and autocracy which were so clearly manifest in the lives of his pretended representatives. They found that Christ had lived a life of spotless purity. They knew that the clergy were often guilty of the most shocking crimes and of the grossest immorality. They studied the teachings of Christ as recorded in the Bible and made comparisons with the dogma of the church and with the current teachings of the clergy. At every point students saw that the clergy were in no sense

the true representatives of Christ. They had departed far from his teachings and from the practices of the Fathers, there being little left to suggest the spirit of Christ.

When a sufficient number of the people came to see just how far the church had gotten away from first-century Christianity, it was but a short step to a wide-spread demand for reform. The Bible became popular, and Bible translation and Bible reading became the order of the day. Stirring orators went from city to city proclaiming the divine authority of the Bible and denouncing the authority of the church. It was a new and strange doctrine. No such ideas had been allowed to reach the masses for more than a thousand years and only at rare intervals had anyone dared to express such views. The time had come when the *holy church* was to be weighed in balances and found wanting. A new source of authority had been discovered, and men vied with each other to excel in their allegiance to this new source of light.

THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE INTERPRETATION

The rediscovery of the Bible and the general recognition of its supreme authority in all matters

of life and conduct gave rise to the doctrine of private interpretation. Prior to the revival of learning and the rediscovery of the Bible, the individual counted for nothing. He was ignorant and entirely at the mercy of the complex ecclesiastical system of his day. His only source of enlightenment was through the clergy, and since they were supposed to be intelligent and he was supposed to be ignorant concerning spiritual affairs, it was impossible for the individual to form an opinion of his own concerning the gravest and most important issues of life. The church was supreme in religious affairs, and its agents held the power of the spiritual life or death of the people.

The church claimed the exclusive right to extend or withhold salvation to her subjects. Salvation rested on good works and good works had a very definite relation to blind obedience to the regulations of the church. When an individual committed sin, he came to the priest and the priest told him what to do to have the sin forgiven. The church believed that the average man committed so many sins that even if he became thoroughly repentant before death, he would nevertheless have to be purified through suffering in purgatory before he could enter the promised land. This

doctrine gave rise to the sale of indulgences, whereby it was possible for a sinner to have his suffering in purgatory greatly reduced or entirely removed upon the purchase of a certificate of pardon from the Pope or his agents.

Luther and other reformers challenged the whole clerical system of salvation. They taught that salvation does not rest upon merit, or upon external conformity to the rules and regulations of the church. They taught that all men are equal before God and that salvation rests upon man's willingness to place himself in the right relation to God through faith in Jesus Christ. This was a fatal blow to the established order of the church. This doctrine which elevated men to a plane of equality with the priests has been commonly called the spiritual priesthood of believers. The most humble man stood before God as the brother of every other man, and he attained this level only through the merit of Christ. It was a new doctrine of personal responsibility and personal opportunity. This doctrine contained the seeds of liberty which were destined to free men from the shackles which had bound them for so many years.

When the common people began to get the idea that they stood directly before God as his children

and that Christ and the apostles had taught and emphasized individual responsibility in matters of faith and conduct, they were ready to throw into discard the long established claims of the church. The individual began to think of himself as being of some account and as having direct and definite personal responsibility to his Maker. He began to shift his allegiance from the *holy church* to the *Holy Book* and began to claim the right to interpret that Book for himself. Of course the reformers differed among themselves and there were many inconsistencies along the way, but of one thing we are sure. The rediscovery of the Bible and its translation into the language of the common people undermined the long established claims and contentions of the church and established firmly the doctrine of personal worth and personal freedom and prepared the way for democracy in church and state.

EDUCATION PREPARES THE WAY

While men were learning to recognize the Bible as a new source of authority and were being led to believe in the right of private interpretation, a great educational movement further strengthened faith in the authority of the Bible and inspired

within the individual a new desire to exercise his inherent right to interpret it for himself. The whole reformation movement was inspired by education and it went forward steadily as the result of a definitely planned educational program.

Luther, who believed thoroughly in education, is recognized everywhere as the founder of the German common school system and, indeed, as the founder of common school education throughout the world. He made religion the very foundation of his educational work. "Where the Holy Scriptures are not the rule," he said, "I should advise no one to send his child."¹ He was so much interested in education that in 1524 he addressed an *Appeal to the Burgomasters and Councilors of all German towns, to establish and maintain Christian Schools*, in which he says:

"I beg you all, dear masters and friends, for God's sake, and our poor children's sake, do not deem this a small matter For it is a grave and weighty matter of great moment to Christ and the whole world, that we help and guide the younger generation What do we elder men live for, but to tend

¹ As quoted in Graves, Frank Pierrepont, *A History of Education During the Middle Ages*, p. 186 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1914). Used by permission.

the rising generation, to instruct and train them God has committed them into our hands, and will call us to heavy reckoning on their account Therefore it behooves all those in authority to devote the utmost care and diligence to the young.”²

Luther knew that the best way to break the power of the church was to make the Bible meaningful to the masses. This could not be accomplished so long as they were ignorant. Recognizing this fact, he went so far as to advocate compulsory education.

“The civil authorities are under obligation to compel the people to send their children to school If the government can compel such citizens as are fit for military service to bear spear and rifle, to mount ramparts, and perform other martial duties in time of war; how much more has it a right to compel the people to send their children to school there is a far worse war, to be waged with the devil, who employs himself secretly in injuring towns and cities through the neglect of education.”³

² As quoted in Koenig, Gustav, *The Life of Luther*, pp. 111-112. (New York: Charles Scribner, 1857). Used by permission.

³ Sermon on *The Duty of Sending Children to School*.

Luther believed that the power of the devil would be curbed in proportion as one became conscious of the power and presence of God. He believed that the Bible contained a unique and authoritative revelation of God and he, therefore, relied upon education as the most effective method to impress the power and presence of God on the mind of the child. He regarded the Bible as an authoritative guide, and proceeded on the basis that if the people could know and understand the Bible, they would know and understand God's will.

Calvin and most of the other leaders of the Reformation emphasized education as essential and necessary. In Geneva, according to a recent writer, "All were trained to respect and obey laws, based upon scripture, but enacted and enforced by representatives of the people, and without respect of persons."⁴ In Monroe's *Cyclopedia of Education*, it is pointed out that an astonishing familiarity with scripture, even among the lowest classes, was a marked characteristic of Huguenot education.⁵ It is very clear that the foremost

⁴ As quoted in Cubberley, Ellwood P., *The History of Education*, p. 331.

⁵ Vol. i, p. 476.

Protestant leaders recognized the fact that the Bible had been rediscovered as the result of an educational movement. These men found their message in the Bible and they relied almost completely upon education to prepare the way for its reception by the people.

TRIAL BY FIRE

In every nation of Europe the century following the rediscovery of the Bible, extending from about 1525 to 1648, was a period of sore persecution for all who were friends of the Bible and for all who stood for freedom of conscience. It may be characterized as a period in which men were tried by fire, because they dared to express courageously their faith in the Bible when all the world seemed to oppose.

Tyndale was not satisfied with his first translation of the Bible; consequently he spent the last years of his life revising and improving his first edition. One day he was led to trust a stranger who professed friendship, but who proved to be a treacherous enemy and a catholic. He was seized and thrown into prison where he remained for eighteen months. All this time, he continued his studies and tried to improve his translation.

Finally on October 6, 1536, he was taken from prison, strangled to death, and his body burned at the stake. His last words were, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."⁶

The story of the Protestant movement in Europe during the century following the deaths of Tyndale and Luther is too horrible to recount. It is a story of war, of massacre, of torture by the inquisition, and of persecution by every known means in an effort to stifle the truth, which had begun to flow from the rediscovered Bible. There were many issues involved, religious and political, but back of the struggle was the burning desire of many people in many nations to be free. What did they want? They wanted the open Bible and the right to worship God according to their own conscience. They struggled courageously for these rights for which thousands and tens of thousands laid down their lives. Was not life precious to these sturdy souls? Yes, life was precious, but life was not more precious than truth and those who led in the struggle were so thoroughly convinced of the truth of the Bible that they willingly died that it might live.

⁶ As quoted in Smyth, J. Paterson, *How We Got Our Bible*, p. 105.

The whole century and more, extending to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 was a period when Protestants were tried by fire and sword and blood. They struggled for what they considered their inherent rights; rights which they believed were recognized and taught in the Bible. These rights were finally won in the nations of Europe, but when the struggle seemed hopeless and the cause of freedom lost, many of the bravest hearts began to look toward America, where they might establish homes and be free to worship God according to conscience and according to their interpretation of the Bible.

CHAPTER V

The Bible Lights a New Continent

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
And light unto my path.”¹

IT was even so during the Old Testament period. God spoke to Abraham and Abraham knew the voice to be the voice of God. Abraham obeyed that voice and as he journeyed to a new and strange land, he walked by the light of God’s word. While Moses was keeping the flocks of his father-in-law, God appeared to him in a flame of fire and called him to a great task. Moses was timid and afraid. He could not at first make up his mind to go. “I will be with thee,”² said the voice, and when Moses was sure that he heard the voice of God, he went forth to lead his people to the promised land. God’s word gave him strength and courage, and he advanced steadily as he trusted for guidance, the pillar of cloud leading by day and the pillar of fire by night.

“I am the light of the world,”³ said Jesus, “the

¹Psalms 119:105

² Exodus 3:12.

³ John 8:12.

light which lighteth every man coming into the world.”⁴ His disciples believed he spoke the truth. They recognized him as sent from God, and they looked steadfastly to him for light. The light began to spread in the midst of great darkness. Christian schools were started, and through education, the light from God’s word was given to thousands of people. In due time the light had spread over all Europe. It burned obscurely for long periods, but it always burned brightly whenever the people had free access to the Bible. In the fullness of time, and in the providence of God, the light shone so brightly that men were led to see new opportunities for kingdom building in far off America. Up, let us go, they said. Let us follow the gleam.

A NATION OF A BOOK

“Religion stands tiptoe in our land,
Ready to pass to the American strand.”⁵

If we are to understand the planting of the Protestant religion in America, we must understand the religious conditions in England at the

⁴ John 1:9.

⁵ As quoted in Slaughter, Philip, *The Colonial Church of Virginia*, p. 17. (Boston: Rand, Avery and Company).

dawn of the seventeenth century. The great Elizabeth had enjoyed a long and peaceful reign. The various religious factions had been to a large extent united, and it had been definitely determined that England would be permanently Protestant. The Act of Supremacy made the Queen the only supreme governor of the realm and the Act of Uniformity set up for the whole kingdom a uniform mode of worship. There were differences of opinion concerning the form of worship, but all Protestants were united in the support of the reigning sovereign. Protestant England had at last settled down to enjoy the fruits of the Reformation.

England had become a nation of a book and that book was the Bible. The people no longer looked to the priest or to the Pope for guidance because they had found a new source of authority. The following paragraph will show the place the Bible and religion occupied in the English mind:

“The Bible was the one book of the people, heard in every church, read in every home where the art of reading had been attained. Its influence upon the national character was incalculable. Its doctrines formed the convictions, its stories tempered the dispositions,

and its diction moulded the very language of the commonalty. And second only to the Bible was the Book of Common Prayer. The familiar anthems and petitions of the daily offices, the stately cadences of the Litany, the evangelical strains of the Communion service, the simple instructions of the Catechism, became the usual expression of their piety, were embalmed in their memories, and formed no small part of their mental furnishing.”⁶

The accession of James I to the throne in 1603 marked the beginning of a most auspicious period for the Bible. Tyndale’s prayer had been answered. The Lord had opened the eyes of the English King, who now became a friend of the Bible and whose counselors were eager to do everything possible to spread its truth throughout the length and breadth of the land.

There were people still living who remembered Tyndale and others who had sacrificed their lives for the truth of the Bible. They could hardly believe their own eyes. The Bible was now an open book. It had become the most popular book

⁶ Goodwin, Edward Lewis, *The Colonial Church in Virginia*, pp. 7-8. (Milwaukee: Morehouse Publishing Company, 1927). Used by permission.

in England, and there was no longer any need to read it in hiding. The whole nation was bent upon extending its influence, and those who had sacrificed most for its sacred truth were most anxious to send the light to new lands beyond the sea.

THE RELIGIOUS MOTIVE FOR COLONIZATION

The Bible had taken possession of the English people to such a degree that we may say they were sur-charged with religion. They lived and moved in an atmosphere of religion and they carried their religion into every manner of activity. Historians have frequently left the impression that the efforts to establish settlements in Virginia were undertaken solely in the interest of finding gold, but this is only a part of the story. The religious motive was always kept well to the front in the very first efforts to establish English colonies in America.

The religious motive is clearly seen in the literary propaganda which immediately preceded the settlement of Virginia. Richard Hakluyt was one of the best informed men in England on matters pertaining to geography. He assisted the East India Company in planning its expeditions and he

was especially active in urging colonization. In his *Discourse on Western Planting*, he contrasted the motives of Portugal and Spain with the motives of Sir Walter Raleigh in establishing an English colony. Referring to Raleigh's effort he gives assurance that . . . "in this action not filthie lucre nor vaine ostentation, as they in deede did, but principally the gayninge of the soules of millions of those wretched people, the reducinge of them from darkness to lighte, from falsehoode to truthe, from dombe idolls to the lyvinge God, from the depe pitt of hell to the highest heavens."⁷

The document known as the *First Charter*, bearing date of April 10, 1606, gives positive assurance that the religious motive was in the minds of those who were officially responsible for the Jamestown colony. The preamble contains the following paragraph:

"III. We greatly commending, and graciously accepting of, their desires for the furtherance of so noble a work, which may, by the Providence of Almighty God, hereafter tend to the glory of His divine Majesty, in propagating of Christian religion to such

⁷ As quoted in Bell, Sadie, *The Church, the State and Education in Virginia*, p. 5 (Lancaster: the Science Press, 1930). Used by permission.

people as yet live in darkness and miserable ignorance of the true knowledge and worship of God, and may in time bring the infidels and savages, living in those parts, to human civility and to a settled and quiet government; Do by these our letters pattents, graciously accept of, and agree to, their humble and well intended desires.”⁸

The religious motive is further established by the appointment of Rev. Robert Hunt as the minister to accompany the Virginia colony. Captain Wingfield, describing the appointment, says: “For my first work (Which was to make right choice of a spirituall pastor) I appeale to the remembrance of my Lo. of Cant. his grace (arch-bishop Bancroft) who gave me very gracious audience at my request.”⁹ Rev. Hunt proved to be a man well fitted for the task, for, long afterward, Captain John Smith gives this godly minister the credit for the success of the enterprise. He was able, according to Smith, with the water of patience and his godly exhortations to quench those flames of envy and dissention, which so frequently broke out among the company.

⁸ As quoted in Goodwin, Edward Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

The last paragraph of the *Advice for the Colony on Landing* is as follows:

“Lastly and chiefly the way to prosper and achieve good success is to make yourselves all of one mind for the good of your country and your own, and to serve and fear God the Giver of all Goodness, for every plantation which our Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted out.”¹⁰

We cannot escape the fact that religion played a large part in the founding of the first permanent English settlement in America. The Bible had so inspired missionary zeal in the English people, that the missionary motive was very closely related to the great colonization movement. These first colonists wanted gold, but back of the desire for gold was the sincere desire to carry the Bible to poor savage people in the fair land of Virginia.

It may be truthfully said that the religious motive was the primary motive which led to the establishment of most of the thirteen colonies. This motive was expressed differently in the different colonies, but it was very prominent in every

¹⁰ As quoted in Neill, Edward D., *History of the Virginia Company of London*, pp. 13-14 (Albany: Joel Munsell; 1869).

settlement. Those who were responsible for the Virginia colony were moved by intense missionary zeal, while those who settled New England and, in fact, most of the other colonies, were prompted by the desire for religious freedom.

When James I came to the throne in 1603, he let it be known that he would not interpret the Act of Uniformity in the same mild spirit as had Elizabeth. Ten months after he became king, he called a conference of prominent Puritan ministers to consider the government and ritual of the church. In the discussion someone mentioned the Presbyterian form of government. James went into a rage. "A Scottish presbytery," he cried, "agreeth as well with a monarchy as God and the Devil. Then Jack and Tom and Will and Dick shall meet, and at their pleasures censure me and my council, and all our proceedings Stay, I pray you, for one seven years, before you demand that from me, and if then you find me pursy and fat, and my windpipes stuffed, I will perhaps hearken to you Until you find I grow lazy, let that alone."¹¹ Every one could see that peril-

¹¹ Fiske, John, *The Beginnings of New England*, pp. 65-66 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1898). Used by permission.

ous times were ahead for those who did not agree with the king. "I will *make* them conform," said he, "or I will harry them out of the land,"¹² and with these words, he dismissed the conference.

Two years later, William Brewster and other Puritans withdrew from the church and organized an independent Congregationalist Society at Scrooby. This congregation suffered greatly from the first, and in another year the leaders were planning the flight to Holland. The story is well known. They did not find conditions satisfactory in Holland and in due time these people were again led to give up their homes and seek new ones in America. They loved the Bible and loved it well enough to undergo any hardship in order to gain religious freedom—the right to worship God in accordance with the dictates of conscience. These men, according to Green, were "driven forth from their fatherland not by earthly want, or by greed of gold, or by the lust of adventure, but by the fear of God, and the zeal for a godly worship."¹³

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

¹³ Green, J. R., *A Short History of the English People*, p. 498 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1877). Used by permission.

It does not seem appropriate to describe the conditions under which each colony was settled. Suffice to say that for a hundred years after Virginia was settled, a constant stream of people kept pouring into America in search of homes where they could be free to worship as they understood the Bible. Through Bible study in Europe, these people had come to see the light of freedom and democracy. The light shone so brightly and these sturdy souls held it so precious, that they braved every danger to be able to allow truth and freedom to reign in their hearts.

THE LIGHT SHINES IN AMERICA

We have seen that the religious motive prompted those who were responsible for the settlement of America. How was that motive expressed in the colonies? Did the Bible actually *light a new continent* or was its message forgotten in the thrill of adventure and commercial achievement?

The light of the Bible did begin to shine among the heathen even before any permanent settlement was made. A record has been left in the writings of Hariot of his own missionary efforts at Roanoke Island, prior to 1586, as follows:

“Many times (he says), and in euery towne where I came, according as I was able, I made declaration of the contents of the Bible, that therein was set foorth the true and onely God, and his mightie workes, that therein was conteined the true doctrine of saluation, through Christ, with many particularities of Miracles and chiefe points of Religion, as I was able then to vtter, and thought fit for the time. And although I told them the booke material-ly and of it selfe was not of any such vertue, as I thought they did conceiue, but onely the doctrine therein conteined; yet would many be glad to touch it, to embrace it, to kisse it, to hold it to their breastes and heads, and stroke ouer all their body with it, to show their hungry desire of that knowledge which was spoken of.”¹⁴

The religious life at the very beginning of the Jamestown colony is clearly described in the following from the writings of Captain John Smith:

“Now because I have spoken so much of the body, give me leave to say somewhat of the soule; and the rather because I have been demanded by so many how we began to preach the Gospel in Virginia, and by what authority; what churches we had, and our

¹⁴ As quoted in Anderson's *History of the Colonial Church*, vol. i, pp. 70-71.

order of service, and maintainance of our ministers, therefore I think it not amiss to satisfie their demands, it being the mother of all our Plantations, intreating pride to spare laughter to understand her simple beginnings and proceedings.

“When first we went to Virginia I well remember we did hang an awning (which is an old saile) to three or four trees, to shadow us from the sunne; our walles were railes of wood; our seats unhewed trees till we cut plankes; our Pulpit a bar of wood nailed to two neighboring trees. In foule weather we shifted into an old rotten tent; for we had few better, and this came by adventure for new.

“This was our church till we built a homely thing like a barne, set upon cratchets, covered with rafts sedge and earth; so was the walls. The best of our houses of like curiosity, but the most part far much worse workmanship, that neither could well defend wind nor raine. Yet we had daily Common Prayer, morning and evening; every Sunday two sermons; and every three months the holy Communion, till our minister died; but our Prayers daily with an Homily on Sundaies, we continued two or three yeares after, till our (more?) preachers came.”¹⁵

¹⁵ As quoted in Goodwin, Edward Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

Sir Thomas Dale, Governor of Virginia in 1611, although a stern soldier was a man of deep religious convictions and he gave his best efforts to advancing the Christian faith in Virginia. He caused the minister to hold regular religious services at his house every Saturday night and there were two sermons every Sunday. Church attendance was compulsory and every officer in the colony was enjoined to see that God was served. "What recompense or what reward for which," he said, "by whom or where, I know not where to expect but from him in whose vineyard I labor, whose church with greedy appetite I desire to erect."¹⁶

Governor Dale was highly pleased with the progress of Pocahontas. "I was moved," he assures us, "by her desire to be taught and instructed in the knowledge of God, her capableness of understanding, her aptness and willingness to receive any good impression, also the spiritual." Commenting further upon her development, the Governor says: "I caused her to be carefully instructed in the Christian religion, who, after she

¹⁶ Bruce, Philip Alexander, *Institutional History of Virginia in the 17th Century*, vol. i, Chapter I (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910). Used by permission.

had made some good progress therein, renounced publicly her country's idolatry; openly confessed her Christian faith; and was, as she desired, baptized.”¹⁷

The first General Assembly in Virginia gave orders in 1619 that each town, city, borough, and plantation in the colony should secure by peaceful means a certain number of Indian children to be nurtured in “true Religion and civile course of life.”¹⁸ The very next year James I gave orders through the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to send out an appeal for funds to be used to establish a college in Virginia for the education of Indian youth. The churches of England responded to this first appeal by subscribing fifteen hundred pounds sterling. This fund was augmented from time to time by generous gifts from private individuals who were intensely interested in the welfare of the colony.

The leaders in the other colonies were just as sincere in their devotion to God and in their love for the Bible as were those in Virginia. This inspiration and zeal for religion in the different

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ As quoted in Bell, *The Church, the State, and Education in Virginia*, page 21.

colonies came from the same source. England had enjoyed the privileges of the open Bible for approximately a half-century before the period of colonization. The following paragraph, which describes the motive and spirit of the New England colonies, is typical of all the others:

“We covenant with the Lord, and one with another; and we do bind ourselves in the presence of God, to walk together in all His ways, according as He is pleased to reveal Himself unto us in His blessed word of truth; — we give ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the word of His grace, for the teaching, ruling, and sanctifying of us in matters of worship and correction, resolving to cleave unto Him alone for life and glory, and to reject all contrary ways, canons, and constitutions of man in His worship.”¹⁹

The purpose of this chapter has been to show the influence of religion in the settlement of America. Effort has been made to cull from the sources only enough material to give convincing proof that the American nation had its beginning in a great wave of religious enthusiasm, which came from the study of the Bible. The Bible had,

¹⁹ Anderson’s *History of the Colonial Church*, vol. ii, p. 154.

indeed, kindled such a fire in England that it could not be put out. Its friends took up the torch and carried it courageously to a new continent beyond the sea.

CHAPTER VI

The Bible Inspires Education

“THE printing of the Bible in the common tongue,” says Cubberley, “did far more to stimulate a desire to be able to read than did the Revival of Learning.”¹ The Protestant revolution introduced new ideas about salvation. It substituted the authority of the Bible for the authority of the church and made every individual personally responsible for his own interpretation of the scriptures. Thus it was when the Bible was printed in the language of the common people, that every person wanted to learn to read. They were no longer satisfied to rely upon the judgment of the priest, or anyone else in so important a matter as salvation. Every person wanted to be able to read the Bible for himself, that he might come to know God and be counted worthy for salvation.

THE FUNCTION OF COLONIAL EDUCATION

The spirit of the Reformation was carried with little change to America. Our forefathers were

¹ Cubberley, Ellwood P., *The History of Education*, p. 310.

interested in education because they desired to give their children an opportunity to know God's will. They accepted the Bible as the only true revelation of God. They believed that it contained divinely inspired truths which, if observed and applied in daily conduct, would make sure its promise of salvation. This made education a very serious matter. Parents were intensely interested about the spiritual welfare of their children. Above everything else, they wanted their children to be able to understand the Bible. The clergy and other leaders were interested in the spiritual welfare of all children and, as in England, they looked to the Bible as the source of spiritual enlightenment. Truly, the Bible afforded the inspiration for education in colonial America.

Meriwether gives positive assurance of the religious motive in colonial education. He reminds us that the people ". were almost nervous to see that the young were brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, because fruitless must man's endeavors be without the blessing of God."² They felt, too, that without a

² Meriwether, Colyer, *Our Colonial Curriculum*, p. 16 (Washington: Central Publishing Company, 1917). Used by permission.

knowledge of God, a man would hardly be in position to receive God's blessings. In a very true sense, our colonial leaders made heaven "our great interest and business" and made "happiness in the other world" the primary motive for all endeavor.³ It is significant to note that they undertook to attain these high goals by means of the educational process.

The following gives an accurate summary of the function of colonial education and indicates conclusively that the Bible did actually inspire education.

"One learned to read chiefly that one might be able to read the Catechism and the Bible, and to know the will of the Heavenly Father. There was scarcely any other purpose in the maintenance of elementary schools. In the grammar schools and the colleges students were 'instructed to consider well the main end of life and studies.' These institutions existed mainly to insure a supply of learned ministers for service in Church and State. Such studies as history, geography, science, music, drawing, secular literature, and organized play were unknown. Children were constantly surrounded, week days and Sun-

³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

days, by the somber Calvinistic religious atmosphere in New England, and by the careful religious oversight of the pastors and elders in the colonies where the parochial-school system was the ruling plan for education. Schoolmasters were required to 'catechise their scholars in the principles of the Christian religion,' and it was made 'a chief part of the schoolmaster's religious care to commend his scholars and his labors amongst them unto God by prayer morning and evening, taking care that his scholars do reverently attend during the same.' ”⁴

The religious motive stands out just as clearly in the effort to establish colleges as it does in elementary education. It was only sixteen years after the first settlement at Plymouth until the effort was begun to establish Harvard College. Think of the difficulties these early settlers had to encounter. “Neither narrowness of territorial limits, nor fear of savage enemies, nor scanty subsistence, nor meager population; neither religious dispute, nor uncertain abode, nor lack of leisure restrained their unbounded zeal for an education that to them seemed not so much desirable as necessary, that ‘the light of learning might not go

⁴ Cubberley, Ellwood P., *op. cit.*, pp. 374-375.

out, nor the study of God's Word perish.'"⁵

The following oft-quoted paragraph shows the true spirit of those who were responsible for the college at Cambridge:

"After we had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, reared convenient places for worship, and settled the civil government, one of the next things wee longed for and looked after was to advance learning and to perpetuate it to posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches, when our present ministers shall lie in the dust."⁶

Ten years after the settlement at Jamestown, effort was begun to establish in the colony the first American "University." The purpose was "the training of the children of the infidels in religion and civility."⁷ One donor sent a gift of five hundred pounds sterling, and stated specifically that it was to be used for the purpose of training in the knowledge of the Christian faith a certain number

⁵ Boone, Richard G., *Education in the United States*, p. 21 (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1914). Used by permission.

⁶ *Ibid.*, page 21.

⁷ As quoted in Slaughter, Philip, *The Colonial Church in Virginia*, p. 17.

of Indian children, from seven, or under, to twelve years of age. The following paragraph shows the scope on which the enterprise was planned; however, the whole project came to naught as a result of the Indian Massacre on March 22, 1622.

“The scheme included a high school as a nursery for the university, whose site was to be at Charles City, now City Point. The university was endowed with fifteen thousand acres of James-river bottom-land on both sides of the river from the Falls to Curles Neck. The King was induced to request the Archbishop to have collections taken up in all the dioceses for this end. Dr. King, Bishop of London, collected a thousand pounds. Five hundred pounds were given by one who signed himself ‘Dust and Ashes.’ Bibles, prayer-books, plate for baptismal and communion offices, and other donations, flowed into the treasury.”⁸

Effort to establish the present William and Mary College was begun approximately forty years after the massacre of 1622. The Charter which was finally granted in 1693 states clearly that the college was to be established in order “that the Church of Virginia may be furnished

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

with a seminary of ministers of the gospel, and that the youth may be piously educated in good letters and manners, and that the Christian faith may be propagated among the western Indians, to the glory of Almighty God.”⁹

Education in the colonial church was for the purpose of saving souls. The inspiration came from the Bible. Witness the following:

“William and Mary College yearned and tossed over the mighty question of pointing the little colony the road to Heaven. Their zeal burned within them to send forth a corps of ministers so that the Christian faith might be propagated even amongst ‘the western Indians to the glory of God.’ ”¹⁰

LEGISLATION AIDS EDUCATION

Religion was the impelling motive which inspired colonial education. The clergy and other leaders urged parents and masters of apprentices to be faithful in their duty to instruct children in the principles of religion and piety. Naturally there were those in the colony who were careless

⁹ As quoted in Goodwin, Edward Lewis, *The Colonial Church in Virginia*, p. 84.

¹⁰ Meriwether, Colver, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

in the performance of this duty, and in due time public sentiment became strong enough to influence legislation in the interest of education.

The Massachusetts law of 1642 ordered that in every town the chosen men appointed for managing the affairs of the same, should be authorized to ascertain whether parents and masters were faithfully performing their educational duties, especially concerning the ability of children to read and understand the principles of religion. Fines were to be imposed upon any who were found negligent of this duty. The law also gave the town authorities power to put forth as apprentices the children of such as they found unable or unfit to properly bring them up.

The first general school law enacted in America gives evidence that colonial education received its inspiration from the Bible. This law was passed in Massachusetts in 1647 and is commonly known as "The old deluder, Satan, Act." It follows with modernized spelling:

"It being one chief object of that old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures, as in former times by keeping them in an unknown tongue, so in these latter times by persuading from the use

of tongues, that so at least the true sense and meaning of the original might be clouded by false glosses of saint-seeming deceivers, that learning may not be buried in the grave of our fathers in the Church and Commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavors,

“It is therefore ordered, That every township in this jurisdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to the number of fifty householders, shall then forthwith appoint one within their town to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read, whose wages shall be paid either by the parents or masters of such children, or by the inhabitants in general, by way of supply, as the major part of those that order the prudentials of the town shall appoint: *Provided*, Those that send their children be not oppressed by paying much more than they can have them taught for in other towns; and

“It is further ordered, That where any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families or householders, they shall set up a grammar school, the master thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the university: *Provided*, That if any town neglect the performance hereof above one year, that every such town shall

pay five pounds to the next school till they shall perform this order.”¹¹

The Massachusetts law was copied widely by the other colonies. The act passed by the court at Hartford in 1676, shows very clearly that public officials of that period were thoroughly interested in religious education.

“Whereas reading the Scripture, catechizing the children and daily prayer with giving of thanks is part of God’s worship and the homage due to him, to be attended conscientiously by every Christian family to distinguish them from the heathen who call not upon God, and the neglect of it a great sin, provoking God to pour forth wrath on such families or persons, for redress whereof, where any such neglect may be found, this court do solemnly recommend it to the ministry in all places, to look into the state of such families, convince them of and instruct them in their duty, and by all due means encourage them that none be found among us utterly ignorant and profane if any heads or governors of such families shall be obstinate and refractory and will not be

¹¹ As quoted in Knight, Edgar W., *Education in the United States*, p. 105 (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1929). Used by permission.

reformed, that the grand jury present such persons to the county court to be fined or punished or bound to good behavior, according to the demerits of the case.”¹²

The several colonies passed numerous laws relating to the establishment of elementary schools and to the founding of grammar schools and colleges. The religious motive stands out clearly in every one of these laws. Witness the following, as evidence of the religious zeal of the Virginia Assembly in 1661, when the colony began to revive interest in the establishment of a college:

“Whereas, the want of able and faithful ministers in this country deprives us of these great blessings and mercies that alwaies attend upon the service of God, which want, by reason of our great distance from our native country, cannot in probability be alwaies supplyed from thence, Bee itt *resolved*, that for the advance of learning, education of youth, supply of the ministry, and promotion of piety, there be land taken upon purchase for a College and free school, and that there be with as much speede as may be convenient,

¹² As quoted in Stewart, George Jr., *A History of Religious Education in Connecticut*, pp. 44-45 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1924). Used by permission.

housing erected thereon for the entertainment of students and schollers.”¹⁸

THE CURRICULUM IN COLONIAL EDUCATION

The Bible formed the very center of the curriculum of all schools during the colonial period. Benezet's speller contained 168 pages with 148 pages devoted to Bible and moral teaching and only 20 pages devoted to spelling. The children learned to spell and to read through the use of materials from the Bible. The educational leaders of the period considered that a knowledge of the Bible was essential to the salvation of the individual. With this one object in mind, it was only natural that the Bible should be used as the basis for the curriculum in all types of schools.

Books were scarce in the colonial period. Instruction began with the *Horn Book*, from which children learned the letters and began to read. They continued their reading from the Bible and the catechism. In due time, various primers appeared and were widely used in homes, churches, and schools. These primers contained the creed, the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments, selected psalms, and simple instruction in the Christian

¹⁸ As quoted in Goodwin, Edward Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

religion. These books were highly devotional. Their main purpose was to impress pupils with the truth of the Christian religion, but they served also as textbooks from which children learned the art of reading.

The most famous and most influential text book in colonial America was the *New England Primer*. Almost one-half of its content was Biblical and the rest gave definite moral teaching in the light of a religious background. The influence of this book is described in the following:

“Being religious in the nature of its contents it was used both in the school and the church, the schoolmasters drilled the children in the reading matter and the catechism in the schools, and the people recited the catechism yearly in the churches. Every home possessed copies of it, and it was for sale at all book-stores, even in the smaller places, for a century and a half. It was reprinted throughout the colonies under different names, but the public preferred the title *New England Primer* to any other. Its total sales have been estimated to have been at least three million copies. It was used in the Boston dame schools as late as 1806, and in the country districts still later, but was gradually discarded for newer types of secular readers.

Compared with the primers and first readers of today it seems poor and crude, but probably no modern textbook will ever exercise the influence over children and adults which was exercised by this little religious reader, $3\frac{1}{4}$ by $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in size, and but 88 pages thick. It has been said of it that 'it taught millions to read, and not one to sin.' The *Psalter*, the *Testament*, and the *Bible* were its natural continuation, and constituted the main advanced reading books in the colonies."¹⁴

The Bible and religion were just as prominent in the curriculum of the colonial colleges as in that of the elementary schools. In 1642, Harvard published nineteen rules for the government of the students. Fourteen of them had to do with the practice of religion. Students were urged to pray in secret for guidance and to read the scriptures twice daily. The degree was to be awarded when "able to read the original of the Old and New Testaments into the Latin tongue and to resolve them originally."¹⁵

The curriculum at William and Mary and the

¹⁴ Cubberley, Ellwood P., *Public Education in the United States*, p. 32 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1910). Used by permission.

¹⁵ As quoted in Meriwether, Colyer, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

other colleges was distinctly religious in character. These colleges had been established to forward the Christian religion and the college authorities saw to it that religion should always dominate the curriculum.

ATMOSPHERE OF RELIGION

Every educational effort in colonial America was conducted in an atmosphere of religion. The regulations governing the duties of the teachers in the schools of Dorchester stated: "Every day of the week at two of the clock in the afternoon, he shall catechise his scholars in the principles of the Christian religion."¹⁶ The teacher was the real servant of the church and ally of the minister. He was required to be constantly on the alert concerning the religious life of his pupils. A typical schoolmaster was Ezekiel Cheever, who taught in the New England schools for a period of seventy years. It has been said that "he was unflagging in earnest endeavors to help his boys to become Christian men."¹⁷

The minister played a very large part in colonial

¹⁶ As quoted in Johnson, Clifton, *Old Time Schools and School Books*, p. 11 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1904). Used by permission.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

education. He was usually the teacher in the grammar schools and he was faithful to assist in strengthening the religious life in all schools. "He was employed for the religious instruction of the people; and as children were an important part of his charge, his visits to the schools were frequent. He examined the children in the catechism and in their knowledge of the Bible, and sometimes questioned them on the sermon of the preceding Sunday."¹⁸ It is said that in Boston, ministers were expected to pray with the pupils and "entertain them with some instructions of piety specially adapted to their age and education."¹⁹

The following paragraph will show how an atmosphere of religion actually pervaded the every-day experience of children in the colonies:

"The children were perpetually enveloped, week-days and Sundays, in an atmosphere saturated with religious forms, service, ideas, and language. To illustrate how omnipresent this religious atmosphere was, I cannot do better than to cite the occasion when Judge Sewell found that the spout which conducted the rain water from his roof did not perform its office. After patient searching, a ball be-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

longing to the Sewell children was discovered lodged in the spout. Thereupon the father sent for the minister and had a season of prayer with his boys, that their mischief or carelessness might be set in its proper aspect and that the event might be sanctified to their spiritual good.”²⁰

Whence came this atmosphere of religion? Why did town councils and state legislatures take occasion to pass laws favorable to religious education? Why did the Bible occupy such a central place in the schools in colonial America? These are interesting questions, but they are not difficult to answer. The Bible was the one great source-book of religious truth. It had inspired courageous souls to face unspeakable hardships in the interest of the expansion of Christianity and in the interest of religious freedom. The builders of America, recognizing their indebtedness to the Bible, were supremely interested in transmitting its message of truth to their children. Thus it was that the Bible furnished the inspiration and driving power for colonial education.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

CHAPTER VII

A New Educational Policy

WE have endeavored to point out that the Bible played a very important role in the settlement of America and in the original efforts to establish schools for the colonists. We now turn attention to a consideration of conditions and tendencies which were responsible for the development of a new educational policy and for bringing about a complete reversal of emphasis in all phases of educational work. This chapter will tell the story of the passing of education from church control to state control. It should serve as a background for an understanding of some of the reasons why the Bible has come to be a lost book to the masses.

COLONIAL EDUCATION WANES

Education in the colonies waned rapidly as the Revolutionary War approached. By 1750, the colonists had begun to see the impending struggle with the mother country. Strange as it may appear, religion had lost much of the zeal and fervor which had made it such an impelling force

in all phases of life during the first century of American history. The decline in religious enthusiasm was accompanied by a loss of interest in education. Many of the earlier schools had ceased to exist and others were conducted on a very low plane. Everywhere education languished because the original motive for education no longer held the interest of the people. They had come to place material things above things of the spirit.

The following description of the situation in Connecticut applies in general to conditions in the other colonies:

“Religion had declined noticeably when the first settlers were passing away. The population began to be mixed. The settlers were no longer of one religious persuasion. Enthusiasms of the strenuous early days had somewhat dimmed by long contact with the wilderness and the crude social and educational condition of a frontier community. Losses at sea, earthquakes, fires, and blighting of crops had dampened the ardor of many in the latter part of the first century To these discouraging events may be added the Indian wars as a part of the general situa-

tion which accounts for a diminution in religious practices.”¹

Religious intolerance, which was so manifest in the later colonial period, was a death blow to education. The different sects had greatly multiplied and the presence of rival sects in the same town or community afforded constant occasion for ill-feeling and strife. The spirit of religious rivalry caught the enthusiasm of many of the colonists and turned them away from their original purpose. They came to America seeking freedom, but in time they lost the true meaning of freedom. The members of one sect held freedom sacred to themselves but they were not always willing to grant the same privilege to others. This inconsistency caused much bitterness and sapped the energies of the people. It was a contributing factor in the decline of education in most of the colonies.

Education suffered terribly during the Revolutionary War. The leaders of the period immediately preceding the war lacked the religious background which the early settlers had acquired. Having lost the dominant religious motive, they

¹ Stewart, George Jr., *A History of Religious Education in Connecticut*, p. 163.

were not much concerned about education. The future of the country was at stake, and it was only natural that the colonists should turn attention from education to other things. Elementary schools were closed throughout the colonies. When the British occupied New York City, practically all schools closed and remained closed until after the war. Grammar schools and colleges were almost deserted. The people had no time for education while engaged in the great struggle for national freedom.

There is evidence that pious souls viewed with alarm the decay of religion and education as the colonial period came to a close. The legislatures of the several colonies were petitioned to pass new laws which might encourage religious education and thus stem the tide of irreligion and immorality. In May, 1714, the Connecticut Assembly considered the growing neglect of religious education and noted "the many evident tokens that the glory is departed from us."² This body did pass new laws requiring the select men of the towns to see that families were provided with Bibles and Catechisms and to see that catechizing be faithfully done.

² *Ibid.*, p. 163.

The colonial period was climaxed by the birth of a new nation. This was a marvelous achievement for the colonies but it was not accomplished without sacrifice. The whole country had been impoverished. Every colony was faced by staggering debts and many people looked to the future with an attitude of gloom and despair. More than all else, the cultural life of the colonies had fallen into decay. The schools had been closed and illiteracy had greatly increased. We must now turn to consider the place education occupied in the thought of the leaders as they undertook to set up a new government.

A NEW MOTIVE FOR EDUCATION

When the Revolutionary War came to an end, a general pall of discouragement settled over the colonies. Independence had been attained but independence was by no means secure. The real war for independence had yet to be fought and there is little wonder that the people were unable to give serious attention to education until after the political future of the country was assured at the conclusion of the War of 1812. It is significant, however, that in the midst of discouragement, there were those who were not discouraged.

Those who had been first in the movement for independence were first to point the new nation to a safe foundation for national security and progress.

The first American proposal for a new system of education was submitted to the Virginia legislature by Thomas Jefferson on June 8, 1779.³ This is known as the *Virginia Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge*. The following from the preamble indicates that in the midst of war, Jefferson was thinking of a new motive for education:

“WHEREAS it appeareth, that however certain forms of government are better calculated than others to protect individuals in the free exercise of their natural rights, and are at the same time themselves better guarded against degeneracy, yet experience hath shewn, that, even under the best forms, those entrusted with power have, in time, and by slow operations, perverted it into tyranny; and it is believed that the most effectual means of preventing this would be to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large, and more especially to give

³ See Maddox, Wm. Arthur, *The Free School Idea in Virginia Before the Civil War*, p. 12 (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1918). Used by permission.

them knowledge of those facts which history exhibiteth, that, possessed thereby of the experience of other ages and countries, they may be enabled to know ambition under all its shapes, and prompt to exert their natural powers to defeat its purposes: and whereas it is generally true that that people will be happiest whose laws are best, and are best administered, in proportion as those who form and administer them are wise and honest; whence it becomes expedient for promoting the public happiness that those persons, whom nature hath endowed with genius and virtue, should be rendered by liberal education worthy to receive, and able to guard, the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens, and that they should be called to that charge without regard to wealth, birth or other accidental condition or circumstances.”⁴

Jefferson wanted to illuminate the minds of the people. He did not disguise his motive. He dreaded tyranny and he sought to redeem the people from tyranny by means of popular education. He was looking to good government—to a government which would guarantee the freedom

⁴ As quoted in Bell, Sadie, *The Church, the State and Education in Virginia*, pp. 163-164.

and happiness of all of the people. He was thinking of people of humble birth and station in life, and his bill provided for their education. He sought to provide a way for all children to receive the cultural inheritance of the past and thus be able to "maintain themselves and exercise with intelligence their part in self-government without the violation of a single natural right of any individual citizen."⁵ Jefferson wanted the people to be free and he trusted education to preserve that freedom. "I have sworn upon the altar of God," he said, "eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."⁶

Jefferson was the first to point out the new motive for education but his views were ably supported by prominent leaders in every one of the colonies. Washington urged the establishment of "institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge." John Adams held that education was a "public responsibility" and he sought to extend its privileges to people "of every rank and class . . . down to the lowest and poorest." Chief Justice Jay proclaimed "knowledge to be the soul of the

⁵ As quoted in Maddox, Wm. Arthur, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

⁶ As quoted in Knight, Edgar W., *Education in the United States*, p. 152.

Republic." James Madison made the motive very clear when he said, "popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both." Those who led in the establishment of our government were fearful of tyranny. They felt that a self governing people must take steps to "arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives." They could see no hope for the preservation of liberty unless the whole people could be made intelligent and honest.⁷

Eleven of the colonies adopted written constitutions for government between 1776 and 1800. The responsibility of the state for education is upheld in six of these documents. A paragraph from the *New Hampshire Constitution of 1784* is typical and expresses the new motive for education.

"Knowledge and learning generally diffused through a community being essential to the preservation of a free government, spreading the opportunities and advantages of education through the various parts of the country being highly conducive to promote this end, it shall be the duty of the legislatures and magistrates, in all future periods of

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-142.

this government, to cherish the interest of literature and the sciences, and all seminaries and public schools.”⁸

Thus it was that a new motive for education was established in the first years of our Republic. Colonial education had been centered in religion. It functioned to serve the church. Its aim had been to prepare people for salvation—to prepare them to enjoy life in the future. The founders of our present government were dominated by entirely different motives. They saw very clearly that “sectarianism could not enlighten the minds of the masses.”⁹ They were interested in the practical affairs of every day life. They desired to build a government in which every man might be free to pursue his own destiny. They were not adverse to religion but they felt that the promotion of religion and religious education should properly belong to the church. They were interested in preserving a free church within a free state and were willing to risk every liberty in the hands of an intelligent people. They trusted education to

⁸ As quoted in Cubberley, Ellwood P., *Readings in the History of Education*, p. 422.

⁹ Knight, Edgar W., *op. cit.*, p. 107.

preserve the integrity of the state and they trusted the state to maintain the liberties of the people.

THE MOVEMENT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

The movement for a democratic system of public education began in earnest about 1825. By this date, the people had become fully conscious of the possibilities of the new nation. Wealth had greatly increased and the leaders of the period were bent upon using the newly acquired wealth for internal improvements. Railroads and canals were being built and there were many evidences that the country was entering a new period of industrial and commercial expansion. It was but natural that the people should also turn their attention to the development of education.

The election of Andrew Jackson to the presidency was a contributing factor to the movement for popular education. He was the first president to come from the ranks of the common people. In one of his campaign speeches, he said, "I have confidence in the virtue and good sense of the people."¹⁰ In this utterance, he reaffirmed the views of Jefferson and helped to strengthen the foundation for new educational advance. Many

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

other leaders were by this time ready to accept his challenge and to pledge their efforts to the development of new educational opportunities for the masses.

Governor Clinton, of New York, in his message to the legislature in 1826, spoke vigorously concerning the educational responsibility of the state.

“The first duty of government, and the surest evidence of good government, is the encouragement of education. A general diffusion of knowledge is a precursor and protector of republican institutions, and in it we must confide as the conservative power that will watch over our liberties and guard them against fraud, intrigue, corruption, and violence. I consider the system of our common schools as the palladium of our freedom, for no reasonable apprehension can be entertained of its subversion as long as the great body of the people are enlightened by education.”¹¹

The friends of public education seized every opportunity to create public sentiment favorable to their cause. Educational conventions were held regularly in the different states and eloquent speakers always proclaimed that illiteracy is the

¹¹ As quoted in Cubberley, Ellwood P., *Public Education in the United States*, p. 112.

peril of democracy. They did not oppose religion or religious education but they boldly asserted that religious education is a function of the church. They did their work in the interest of good government. They showed that democratic government depends upon an intelligent citizenship and that general intelligence cannot be guaranteed if education should be left to random groups of citizens or to the various religious denominations.

Horace Mann became secretary of the Board of Education in Massachusetts in 1837. When he took office, he wrote in his diary:

“Henceforth so long as I hold this office I devote myself to the supremest welfare of mankind upon earth I have faith in the improbability of the race—in their accelerating improbability. This effort may do, apparently, but little. But mere beginning a good cause is never little. If we can get this vast wheel into any perceptible motion, we shall have accomplished much.”¹²

He made good this noble resolve and in due time he was able to get the wheel of education into perceptible motion. “No one did more than he to establish in the minds of the American people

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 165.

the conception that education should be universal, non-sectarian, and free, and that its aims should be social efficiency, civic virtue, and character, rather than mere learning or the advancement of sectarian ends.”¹⁸

The influence of Horace Mann was felt in other states. Leaders in every state began to proclaim the necessity of public education, and in every state there were other leaders who were ready to oppose. The opposition was usually led by sectarian groups, which sought to have the state give support to their own schools. The public schools were referred to as godless schools and every effort was made to retard their progress. At times it seemed as if the movement could not win, but by the middle of the century, the cause of public education seemed reasonably safe in most of the states.

“In laws and constitutional provisions after 1850 the monopoly of the Church in education—especially in the elementary schools—gave way to the increasing power of the State. The aims of the school, which had been religious during the colonial period and the early years of the national period, gradually

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

became civic. The subject matter of instruction came slowly to be purged of sectarian and denominational elements, control of education shifted from the Church to the State, and prohibitions were set up against the diversion of public-school funds to contending religious sects who had sought public aid for the propagation of their own peculiar beliefs.”¹⁴

Jefferson's plan for the *More General Diffusion of Knowledge*, as presented to the Virginia Legislature in 1779, involved a complete plan of education from the common schools to the university. Each county was to have its common elementary schools and, as proposed, the several adjoining counties were to maintain grammar schools and academies. The most promising boy in each elementary school was to be sent for two years with free tuition and board to the nearest academy. William and Mary College was to be the head of the system and the plan provided that twenty of the brightest and best from the academies should be sent every year to the college for any course they might elect.¹⁵

Jefferson defended his plan on the ground that

¹⁴ Knight, Edgar W., *op. cit.*, p. 214.

¹⁵ See Maddox, William Arthur, *op. cit.*, Chapter II.

“ever fiber of ancient and future aristocracy would be eradicated and a foundation laid for a government truly republican.”¹⁶ The plan was weak, in that it provided only for local taxation and local control. There were many communities where the people were wholly uninterested in the development of education. Other groups opposed the plan because of sectarian prejudice or because they feared that such schools would tend to become godless schools. When Jefferson saw that the whole scheme could not be carried out, he proposed to separate the provisions for elementary education and higher education and began to turn his attention to the establishment of a state university.

Jefferson wanted a state university for the same reason that he wanted to inaugurate a state system of common school education. He feared aristocracy and he always associated aristocracy with tyranny. He could see no future for democratic government unless the government should have charge of the education of the people. He believed so strongly in the principles of religious freedom that he could not see how a state institution could possibly teach religion.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

The movement for public education was bitterly opposed in all of the states for approximately a hundred years. The strongest opposition came from churchmen, who were all the time urging state legislatures to grant financial aid to sectarian educational projects. The following paragraph indicates something of the type of propaganda which friends of public education had to face during this long period:

“Many a promising youth, the light of his parents’ eyes, the joy of their hearts, and the subject of their fondest hopes, has brought on them the bitterest disappointments, and hastened their sorrowful progress to the grave, merely because the due culture of his moral feelings had been totally neglected. A cold and callous-hearted philosopher heeds not this suffering. He has formed his theory. He steadfastly maintains that learning and science will ensure virtue and wisdom; and pursues his plans while the morality of the state is continually lowering its standard, and she is daily losing her influence.—We commenced this course at the close of the revolution; and now we begin to see its results. Gentlemen, we have been long enough misled by this error. It is time to attempt a change. When infidelity spread

its poison through the land, then many of the practical maxims, which made our forefathers equal to the foremost men of all the world, were abandoned; The work of education is only half performed, when man's moral powers are uncultivated Arguing then on what is admitted; permit me to ask, in tones of deepest earnestness, is the banishment of religion from seats of learning, likely to subserve the true interests of virtue, science and literature among us?"¹⁷

That Jefferson was favorable to giving the churches every possible advantage to teach religion is seen in a letter to Dr. Samuel Cooper in 1822:

"In our University there is no professorship of divinity. A handle has been made of this to disseminate an idea that this is an institution not merely of no religion, but against all religion. An occasion was taken at the last meeting of the Visitors to bring forward an idea that might silence this calumny, which weighed on the minds of some honest friends to the institution. In our annual report to the Legislature, after stating the constitutional reasons against a public establishment of any religious instruction, we suggest the expediency of encouraging the different relig-

¹⁷ As quoted in Bell, Sadie, *op. cit.*, p. 377.

ious sects to establish, each for itself, a professorship of their own tenets, on the confines of the University, so near as that their students may attend the lectures there, and have the full use of our library, and every other accommodation we can give them; preserving, however, their independence of us and of each other. This fills the chasm objected to ours, as a defect in an institution professing to give instruction in all useful sciences. I think this invitation will be accepted by some sects from candid intentions, and by others from jealousy and rivalship. And by bringing the sects together, and mixing them with the mass of other students, we shall soften their asperities, liberalize and neutralize their prejudices, and make the general religion a religion of peace, reason and morality.”¹⁸

James Madison, being a firm believer in the complete separation of church and state, defended the University of Virginia, as follows:

“A University with sectarian professorships, becomes, of course, a Sectarian Monopoly: with professorships of rival sects, it would be an Arena of Theological Gladiators. Without any such professorships, it may incur for a time at least, the imputation of irrelig-

¹⁸ See Bell, Sadie, *op. cit.*, pp. 374-375.

ious tendencies, if not designs. The last difficulty was thought more manageable than either of the others.”¹⁹.

The friends of public education struggled for a long period before they could be sure of the ultimate success of the movement. Success came much earlier in the Northern and Western States than in the South, but it is safe to say that by 1870, the movement for public education had been accepted in principle, in all parts of the country. By this time, it was definitely assured that the democratic state would build an efficient and comprehensive system of schools for the masses. These schools would be free to all and free from sectarian control. They would be supported by the State and operated and controlled by chosen representatives of the people. Jefferson’s vision had at last come true. The people had been led to accept a new educational policy—a policy which makes the state responsible for the general education of the people and which leaves every church entirely free to interpret and teach religion as it may desire.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

THE EMPHASIS REVERSED

What were the churches doing while the movement for public education was being developed? They were exerting their efforts to establish a system of church academies and colleges. They were also gradually accepting the secular Sunday School and were adapting it to serve as an agency for religious education. By the end of the nineteenth century, the church academies and colleges had been paralleled by a great system of state controlled high schools and colleges and the Sunday Schools had been paralleled by an efficient system of universal education for the masses. The development of our church schools had by no means kept pace with the development of our public schools.

Contrast the emphasis which prevailed in education during the first half of the eighteenth century with that which prevails in the first half of the twentieth century. In the earlier period, religion was central in all education. The aim of education was to enrich the spiritual life of the individual. In the present period, the aim of education is to prepare the individual to live efficiently in a democratic society. In the earlier period the

church wielded a powerful influence in the schools. Many of the leaders in all walks of life came from these schools in which the Bible and religion held first place. In the present period, the great mass of students have never had the opportunity to receive the Christian message through organized educational effort. The emphasis of two hundred years ago has been almost completely reversed.

Public education has had a depressing effect upon the remaining remnants of church controlled schools. The Sunday Schools do not compare favorably with the public elementary schools. What has happened to the host of church controlled academies? Most of them have been replaced by the American high school. How have the church colleges fared as they have been forced to meet the competition of splendid state colleges? The story is well known. Many colleges have been closed and many of the remaining church schools are now fighting for their very lives. The outlook for church controlled education is not particularly encouraging.

Effort has been made in this chapter to briefly trace the development of public education in America. It should not at any point be construed as a criticism of our present educational policy.

We must forever maintain the efficiency of public education, but there is another side to the picture. Churchmen are interested in certain educational values which do not at all come within the scope of public education. What place will religion occupy in the life of the people during the remainder of the twentieth century? This is a timely question and it can only be answered in the light of a study of the church's educational policy and program. If the church should fail to provide adequately for the religious education of children in a single generation, the power and influence of the Christian message will be correspondingly less effective in succeeding generations of adults.

CHAPTER VIII

The Lost Bible in the Twentieth Century

THE Bible is the world's best seller. It has been translated and printed in almost every language and dialect, and its friends have carried it to every part of the world. It is given an honored place in the homes of rich and poor in all Christian lands, and leaders of non-Christian religions are free to recognize that it is a book of very superior value. How, then, can there be any meaning in the suggestion that the Bible may be lost in the twentieth century?

The writer is thinking of the message of the Bible and not of the Bible, as a book. The Bible was not entirely lost during the Middle Ages, but conditions were such that its message could not reach the masses. Granting that a fair majority of twentieth century boys and girls have easy access to the Bible, gives no certain guarantee that these boys and girls will appropriate for themselves the central message and spirit of the Bible. The Bible must be taught thoroughly and effectively, or its message will be lost. It is quite pos-

sible for children to be surrounded with Bibles and still lose the Bible's message, as they pass from childhood to maturity.

WHAT DO TESTS REVEAL?

Many efforts have been made to measure the effectiveness of religious education by various Biblical information tests. Those who have conducted these tests are free to recognize that Biblical information is not the goal in religious education. They believe, however, that a knowledge of the actual situation with regard to what a group may know about the Bible will throw some light upon the probable ability of that group to incorporate in daily conduct the message and spirit of the Bible. When it has been discovered that a child knows nothing about the facts of the Bible, there is certainly ample reason for suspicion that he may be unprepared to live his life in accordance with the lofty ideals of the Bible.

A brief review of the results of two significant tests which were recently conducted in Virginia will throw light upon our problem. The situation in the Old Dominion is probably typical of other states, especially of states which have predominately a rural population.

THE VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEST

With a view to securing first hand information about the actual situation in Virginia, the State Council of Religious Education undertook to conduct a Biblical information test in 213 high schools. These schools were well distributed over the state and were located in cities, towns, and in the open country. The purpose of the test was to measure the effectiveness of religious education from the one standpoint of Biblical information. Those who promoted the test took the position that a knowledge of this one point would aid the churches in measuring the effectiveness of their educational work. The children tested were all students in accredited high schools. The purpose of the test was to establish a fair basis for comparing the effectiveness of public education and religious education in these 213 communities.

A committee of clergymen and educational leaders prepared a list of ten questions from the Old Testament and ten from the New Testament. Effort was made to select questions which could be answered in one word. The actual test sheet is reproduced as follows:

BIBLE TEST FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Name of High School _____

Are you a first, second, third, or fourth year student? _____

Age _____ Male _____ Female _____ Do you attend
check checkSunday School? _____ Regularly? _____
yes or no check checkHalf of the time? _____ Seldom? _____
check checkAnswer each question carefully—*Do not sign your name.*

1. Who was the father of the Hebrew race? _____

2. To whom did God deliver the Ten Commandments? _____

3. Who was the first king of the Hebrew nation? _____

4. Who built the first temple at Jerusalem? _____

5. Name three prophets of the Old Testament _____

6. Name the boy who was sold into slavery by his brothers _____

7. Name the young woman of the Old Testament who said,
“Entreat me not to leave thee or to return from fol-
lowing after thee” _____

8. How many books make up our Bible? -----
9. In what village or city was Jesus born? -----
10. In what village or city did Jesus pass his youth? -----

11. How old was Jesus when he said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" -----
12. Who baptized Jesus? -----
13. What was Jesus' first miracle? -----
14. Name the man living at Bethany whom Jesus raised from the dead -----

15. Name any three of the disciples of Jesus -----

16. Name the disciple who denied Jesus three times the night before his crucifixion -----
17. Who was the first Christian martyr? -----
18. Name the four Gospels -----
19. How many people were converted when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost? -----
20. Who said, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, but the greatest of these is charity?" -----

The Principal will kindly collect the papers, and send them to the Virginia Council of Religious Education, Inc., Bridgewater, Va.

The first step was to secure the cooperation of the high school principals. After this was done, the test sheets and printed instructions were sent to each principal, who gave the test and returned the sheets to the State Council office for classification and grading. The test was given to 18,434 pupils. Every one of them was a student in an accredited high school. *The average grade was 46 per cent.*

It should be pointed out that this average grade was only possible because the city students made a somewhat higher grade than the rural school students. The test was given to 1036 high school pupils in the city of Roanoke and they made an average grade of 59 per cent. In the city of Norfolk, 1169 pupils made a grade of 53 per cent. There were many rural schools where the average was less than 30 per cent.

There were 12,006 students who stated on the test sheet that they attended Sunday School regularly. They made a grade five per cent higher than the average, or 51 per cent. On the other hand there were 3,798 students who stated that they attended Sunday School half of the time and they made an average grade seven per cent lower than the average, or 39 per cent. Those who

stated that they seldom attended Sunday School made 35 per cent, and those who never went made 32 per cent. The boys averaged 42 per cent and the girls 49 per cent.

The question, *Name three prophets of the Old Testament*, was missed by 16,000 of the 18,434 students taking the test. The children made a little better grade on the New Testament questions but 12,000 were unable to *name the four gospels* and nearly 10,000 could not *name three of the disciples of Jesus*.

What would be a fair conclusion from the result of this test? Certainly the most skeptical person would agree that the churches in these 213 communities have not been giving the children a very thorough knowledge of the facts of the Bible. It is hoped that these children have a better knowledge of the message and spirit of the Bible than they have of Biblical facts. Do Protestant leaders have any certain guarantee that this is true? It is possible that children who, through failure of education, lose the facts of the Bible, may also come dangerously near to losing the message and spirit of the Bible.

THE VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE TEST

The Virginia Polytechnic Institute, in cooperation with the Rural Church Conference Board, recently conducted a Biblical information test in which twelve hundred high school students and eight hundred college students participated. This test was conducted under the personal supervision of Professor C. H. Hamilton, Assistant Rural Sociologist and member of the staff of the Institute.

In this test, there were thirty questions or problems relating to the Old and New Testaments. The students were asked to give their judgment in several possible answers and to fill in missing words or parts of sentences. The same questions were given to high school and college students.

Allowing for the element of *guess* which always figures in any multiple choice test, the average grade of the high school students was 38.25 per cent and the average grade of the college students was 49.5 per cent. This test was given to a much smaller number of students but it was given under more uniform conditions. It is quite significant that the average score was even lower than in the

larger test, notwithstanding the fact that two-fifths of the students were of college grade.

THE BIBLE AND THE HOME

It would seem fair to conclude that the Bible may be found in a large majority of the homes of America. This situation, while encouraging, does not offer conclusive proof that the Bible may not still be lost. Many homes which provide storage space for numbers of Bibles have never yet developed an effective and workable plan for teaching the Bible. The church has been partly at fault. The average parents have not been trained to use the Bible intelligently and few of them have ever had any special training designed to prepare them to teach it effectively in the home. Why should not the church be greatly concerned about helping parents to be able to give their children a meaningful interpretation of the Bible?

We cannot escape the fact that great changes have recently taken place in the average home. In a former day, there were very few books and relatively few activities to claim the attention of parents and children. There was time for Bible reading and study. There would still be time, but people do not think so. They have yielded them-

selves to the lure of other things. Parents are proud of the fact that they have provided copies of the Bible for every member of the family and in the rush of their busy lives, they fail to realize that the Bibles, which they have provided, are seldom used. These parents may wake up some day to find that their own children have lost the Bible. There can hardly be any other result if Christian parents fail to teach and use the Bible in their homes. It may easily happen that homes filled with Bibles may actually contribute to those conditions which threaten to make the Bible a lost book in the twentieth century.

THE SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL

In chapter seven, we traced briefly the development of our present educational policy in the United States. We noted some of the reasons why the state is building a comprehensive system of public education and some of the reasons why religion cannot be taught in our State supported public schools. We were led to lay chief responsibility for teaching religion upon the church. We must now undertake an inquiry concerning the scope of influence and general effectiveness of the chief educational agency of the church. Perhaps

the Sunday church school may no longer be an effective agency for preserving and passing on those supreme values contained in the Bible.

The Sunday church school does not reach the masses. According to Fry, in *The United States Looks at its Churches*, only 44 per cent of the population under nineteen years of age in the United States are enrolled in Sunday School.¹ This represents a loss of 4 per cent in the ten year period from 1916 to 1926. It is generally agreed that average attendance the country over is not much over fifty per cent of the enrollment. These facts raise serious questions as to the ability of the Sunday church school to interpret the Bible to the masses. How can the Christian message affect those who never come under its influence? The church has long depended upon the Sunday church school as its chief agency for reaching the people. In many communities, there is no other agency. How shall we view the situation? Will the Bible be safe in the hands of an educational agency which does not reach half of the people and which is able only to touch this group for approximately half of the time?

¹Page 3

The Sunday church school is in session for approximately one hour of one day a week. This situation would of itself bring a very serious indictment upon the effectiveness of any school. The great majority of these Sunday church schools have very meager equipment. Many of them are poorly organized and have an inadequate curriculum. The teachers and supervisors, in many cases, have had little or no training for their work. The whole situation is pathetic, when it is recognized that the church still relies upon this agency, as its main agency, for preserving through education those values which have come to us from the world's greatest Book.

There is grave danger of losing the Bible in any community which operates its church schools on a level of efficiency which is distinctly lower than that which prevails in the public schools. The same children attend both systems of schools. What will they think of the value of religion when they reach high school age and begin to compare the public schools with their church schools? They recognize that the public schools are efficient and that the church schools are usually very inefficient. They can see that the public schools cost a great deal of money and that their parents will-

ingly pay the cost in public taxation. They can see also that the church schools cost much less money and many of them frankly question whether the church schools are worth the time and effort which attendance requires. Most of them are sincere and honest in their convictions. They do not mean to be irreverent. They simply get the impression that religion is unimportant and they begin to thrust it out of their lives. The situation would surely be different if all phases of religious education could be lifted to the approximate level of public education. This can be done and must be done if the church desires to maintain proper respect for the Bible.

THE PROTESTANT CHURCH COLLEGE

The Protestant church has spent most of its educational effort in the field of higher education. Splendid colleges have been established and endowed in the interest of the religious education of a relatively small and favored group. The church has had little money to spend to provide opportunity for the religious education of the masses. They have been compelled to grow up in varying degrees of religious illiteracy, and those who have received any training at all have had to be content

with the opportunity offered in the Sunday church schools.

When the colleges were first established, the church was able to justify the expenditure of funds on the basis of the claim that the colleges were designed for the special purpose of training leaders for the church. These early colleges did make good this claim, for their entire curriculum and program was built around the Bible and religion. Their students received such thorough training in religion that they usually became able defenders of the Bible and loyal supporters of the church.

The situation is greatly changed today. Most of the church colleges have modeled their curriculum and program after the fashion of the great state colleges. They have almost completely reversed their emphasis upon religion. In a former day, religion was central in the curriculum. Now it is distinctly a side issue. At one time, the chair of Bible and religion was filled by the ablest man on the faculty, but in many church colleges today, the courses in Bible and religion are divided among professors whose major work is in some other department. The result of this reversal of emphasis is very plain. The students get the same impression which other students get in the Sunday

church schools. They are quick to grasp the significance of the fact that the *church controlled college gives the Bible and religion only a minor place in its curriculum*. Even though students enroll for courses in Bible and religion, they usually think of such courses as of relatively less importance than other courses. They cannot escape the negative impression which reflects upon religion because of its subordinate place in the college curriculum.

It is encouraging to note that the situation is improving. Many colleges have begun to strengthen their departments of religion but much more must be done if church colleges are to avoid responsibility for the lost Bible. The department of Bible and religion will have to be dignified and raised to the same level of efficiency as prevails in other departments. If the college is committed to the principle of required courses, it will be necessary to require courses in Bible and religion equal to the maximum number of courses required in any other department. The elective basis for courses in religion is not sound in principle, unless all other courses are on this basis. Many church colleges require from twelve to sixteen semester hours in science and offer *only elective courses in religion*.

There is no conflict between religion and science, but the whole cause of religion is sure to suffer in any church college which requires its students to study a definite number of courses in science and leaves them entirely free *to choose or not to choose* courses in religion. This policy has turned many students against the Bible and if it is long continued the church college will have to take its full share of responsibility for making the Bible a lost book in the twentieth century.

TIME TO TAKE INVENTORY

The Bible is not wholly lost, but it is being lost to the masses. Great changes have come during the last century, and the Protestant church has been slow to make adjustments. Our grandparents and great grandparents lived in a period when religion was central in education. We live in a day when religion is not recognized in organized public education. The church has allowed her schools to lag far behind the level of public education, and, as a result, the whole cause of religious education suffers.

It is freely recognized that the church has recently made splendid improvement in many of her schools. Thousands of new and well-equip-

ped buildings bear testimony to this fact. There has also been splendid advance in the fields of organization, curriculum, leadership training, and other phases of work. These are encouraging signs, but much more should be done. The Christian message is at stake, and nothing can save it for the masses except a comprehensive educational program, designed to meet the needs of the twentieth century.

It is time to take inventory! Church leaders in every community should study religious education in relation to public education. They should give primary concern to the impression children receive when they compare the church schools with the public schools. Church leaders should also ponder well the meaning of the various tests which reveal such alarming religious illiteracy. They should also re-study the contribution which the Bible has made to civilization during the last nineteen hundred years. In the light of these and other studies, the Protestant church should prepare to launch her greatest educational effort. If there is further hesitation or delay, the Bible may be lost. It is time to take inventory!

CHAPTER IX

If the Bible Should Be Lost

LIFE is mighty interesting in the twentieth century. More than thirty years of it have now passed into history and they have been very wonderful years. This period may well be called the era of the great advance. There has been advance in so many lines. Witness the marvelous changes in transportation. This is the day of automobiles and aeroplanes. It is the day of speed! The whole field of electricity has produced countless thrills, and, more than thrills—it has brought comforts and conveniences which, until recently, were unknown. We marvel at the great advance in chemistry and in every other branch of science, and when we think of high explosives and poison gas in the hands of men of malevolent will, we shudder and hold our breath. We cannot comprehend the meaning of the great advance in every phase of public education. The masses are going to school as never before and everyone is struggling for freedom and self-expression. Suppose the Bible should be lost! Would the masses know the difference?

The Christian church has prized the Bible as its most precious possession. Its leaders have given their lives by the thousands for the sake of the truth of this wonderful Book. The church still prizes the Bible and most of its leaders think of it as the Book of books. They acknowledge that the Bible contains a revelation of God which is found nowhere else and they hold it in reverence and honor because of its transforming power in the world.

Modern churchmen frequently forget that those who have prized the Bible most, have been most eager to have it taught. Martin Luther was so much a friend of the Bible that he urged compulsory education so that every child might comprehend its message. What would be the consequences if the modern church should fail to seriously impress the masses with the message of the Bible? We now turn our attention to a consideration of this problem.

GOD LOST, IF THE BIBLE IS LOST

“And God said, let us make man in our image.”¹

God wanted a family. He created this wonderful universe—the starry heavens, the sea and the

¹ Genesis 1:26

dry ground. He made the trees, the flowers, the animals and the birds. He saw that it was all good, but he was not satisfied. He longed for children with whom he could have fellowship. "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him And Jehovah formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."² The work of creation was at last complete and God's purpose was accomplished. He could now have fellowship with children of his own creation—children formed after the very image of God and with possibilities for growing into the perfect likeness of their divine Father.

This child of God was distinctly different from anything else which God had made. He had, of course, many structural similarities with other animals and he had also many instincts, or tendencies in common with lower forms of creation, but God gave him spiritual qualities which were essentially like unto Himself. This child of God, or man—the real man—the spirit, or personality, was made in the image of God, with capacity to think the thoughts of God and with an innate long-

² Genesis 1:27; 2:7.

ing to have fellowship with his Father. He was God's child—fully as much like God in spiritual qualities as any child is like his father in physical qualities. God created man because he wanted a family and having endowed him with such marvelous possibilities, God gave him unique and special opportunities for development.

God met his obligation to his children by giving them a special revelation. He spoke in the different ages "unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manner."⁸ The record of this special revelation has been preserved in the Bible. Every page tells the story of how God's children have responded to their Father's will. It is a many-sided story, for they have not always been dutiful children. The Bible gives the record of how God's children have acted under all circumstances and in many ages of the past. The story reveals at every point the nature of God and his purpose in creation. It tells of his wisdom and power and love and offers to every child helpful guidance in the practical affairs of life. It is the treasure Book of the ages—the Book which, more than any other, has aided man to find fellowship with his creator.

⁸ Hebrews 1:1

What would it mean to lose the Bible? It would be an irreparable loss. To lose the Bible would be equivalent to losing the God of the Bible. With no Bible, man would have no special aid in finding his Father. Life and experience would be more mysterious than ever, and the outlook on the future would be dark and uncertain. God speaks to his children through nature and in other ways but he speaks plainest through the Bible. Where there is no Bible, God has greater difficulty in making himself known to his children, and without this special revelation, many children are compelled to remain forever in ignorance of their Father.

When we contemplate the marvelous advantages of the twentieth century, it seems manifestly unfair that any child should be compelled to grow to maturity without receiving a thorough understanding of the message of the Bible. God breathed into man the breath of life and thus gave every child a longing to find his Father. The Bible is a guidebook to aid children in finding God. It is *a lamp to their feet and light to their pathway*. It is, indeed, a free gift and it was intended for every child. How, then, can the church escape the judgment of God if it should permit the Bible

to be lost? Churchmen should not be afraid to face the facts. There is strong evidence that the Bible is already lost to thousands of children in America, which condition has resulted from the failure of education. It is a very great loss for, when a child loses the Bible, he loses his best opportunity to find God.

CHRIST LOST, IF THE BIBLE IS LOST

Christ came to the world to reveal the Father and the record of that revelation has been preserved in the Bible. It is a matchless revelation. It shows the perfection of God-like qualities in the personality of Jesus. He lived his life as in the very presence of God and claimed to be on an equality with God. "I and the Father are one,"⁴ said Jesus; "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father."⁵

When Jesus was twelve years of age, he astonished the wisest men of his day by his familiarity with the Old Testament Scriptures. His mother could not understand his conduct in the temple but Jesus assured her that he must be about his Father's business. When he became a teacher, the

⁴ John 10:30.

⁵ John 14:9.

people everywhere were astonished. He spoke with authority and not as their scribes. Some of the people took him for John the Baptist and others thought he was Elijah, or one of the other prophets returned from the dead. Everyone marvelled at his words and they all agreed that never man spoke as he spoke.

Jesus gave an adequate explanation of his wonderful life and work. He declared himself to be the Son of God. It seems that God got to the surface completely in Jesus and everyone he touched was blessed by the winsomeness of his personality. He lived most intimately with his disciples and in time they became willing to give up their lives for the sake of the principles their Master had taught. Little children found joy in his presence and he blessed them. The blind, the lame, the sick, and those who were morally depraved responded to the gentleness of his words or touch. He lived *as a God among men* and every person he touched was deeply impressed by the grandeur of his perfect life.

History gives abundant testimony of the transforming power of Jesus during the last nineteen hundred years. To seriously contemplate his life, is to recognize one's own incompleteness and in-

sufficiency. He points men to a new way—a highway which leads them back to their Father. What would happen if the Bible should be lost? It would mean that Jesus would be lost, for Jesus comes to every generation through the Bible. If a person has no meaningful appreciation of the life and message of Jesus, as given in the Bible, it is fairly certain that the Bible is lost to that person. It is certain also, that the transforming power of Christianity can never influence a person who knows nothing of the Christian message. Jesus is the *fairest among ten thousand* to those who know him but he is nothing to those who have never been taught the old, old story of his love.

When the Bible is lost to a group, a community, a state, or a nation, the effect is the same as when it is lost to an individual. The group cannot be influenced by that of which it is ignorant. If the Bible is lost to one-half, or three-fourths of the individuals of the group, the negative effect is tremendous. A small minority can always exert a wholesome influence, but that influence will be greatly minimized if the majority is ignorant of the source from which the influence comes. The Christian message is recorded in the Bible and if the Bible is lost, the Christian message will be lost.

It can only be saved by means of a thorough and comprehensive educational program for the masses.

PAGANISM, IF THE BIBLE IS LOST

The civilization of the first century was distinctly pagan. Power and pleasure were the dominant ideals of men. The masses existed to serve the few and to be used at will by them in their pursuit of pleasure. Life, for most of the people, was not worth living. The whole world was engulfed in spiritual darkness and despair.

Jesus came to reveal God and to set new standards before the world. He was always interested in persons, rather than in things. He taught men to understand something of the nature of the Supreme Person and taught them also to appreciate the glory and beauty and true worth of all persons. It was a new gospel but it soon became a mighty force in the world. It has inspired a countless number of teachers and whenever they have taught effectively, men and women have been led to transfer allegiance from things to persons and to live new lives. What if this message should be lost to one-half, or three-fourths, or nine-tenths of the people? Would not this

lead to a marked ascendancy of power and pleasure as dominant ideals, and to a civilization which is essentially pagan?

The fact that many writers on religious and social themes are beginning to point out the peril of paganism is a most encouraging sign. Ellwood asks a number of thought provoking questions:

“Has Christianity as a social system proved a failure? Is a Christian society possible? Is Christianity ‘irretrievably obsolescent’? Are not human brotherhood, universal justice, and universal good will but idle dreams, ‘a species of oriental mysticism,’ in a world ruled by force and swayed by individual and group egoism? In order to be honest, should we not frankly go back to paganism as our rule of life?”*

Why should such questions be asked? Do they simply indicate the fears of a pessimist? They do indicate fears, but fears based more on facts than on fiction. Things are far from what they ought to be in America if we would call America a Christian nation. Power and pleasure were dominant motives in Roman civilization of the

* Ellwood, Charles A., *The Reconstruction of Religion*, p. 95 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1922). Used by permission.

first century, and much as we may shrink from the accusation, power and pleasure are controlling motives in the twentieth century. We have much in America to remind us of Ancient Rome. Christian men and women ought to be aroused; they ought to do something about it.

We worship at the shrine of material success. We possess so many things and they almost overwhelm us. This fact is well presented in the following:

“The man who purchases a corner lot for \$5000 and two years later sells it for \$12,000 is credited with good judgment. The broker who buys at 89 and sells at 148 is congratulated by his friends. The name of the home run king whose salary runs into five figures is a household word throughout the land. The prize fighter who receives \$350,000 for a few well directed blows is acclaimed a national hero. The movie star who draws a salary of a million dollars a year is the idol of the fans. The farmer whose potato patch is transformed into an oil well and whose old buggy is exchanged for a Rolls-Royce, becomes an object of admiration and envy on the part of his neighbors. And so it goes through mod-

ern life. The possessive instincts, the desire to own and to display are prominent."⁷

Yes, paganism is a real peril in America. Christianity is recognized as our leading religion but serious minded men and women will always be concerned about the depth of our Christianity. We are a very wealthy nation and much of our wealth is in the hands of a small minority of our people. Think of the millions who, because of poverty, are compelled to live below the minimum standards of decency and comfort. Think of low wages and unemployment and of all the attendant evils. Think of racial barriers which work against the development of personality. Consider well the mounting tide of lawlessness and crime! Is America a Christian nation? Yes, we call America a Christian nation, but if we would face the facts, we must know that paganism threatens to destroy our Christian ideals. Why is paganism a peril and why does it threaten to destroy our Christianity? It is because the church has failed to seriously impress the masses with the ideals of Christ. We have so much of paganism, because we have

⁷ Page, Kirby, *Incentives in Modern Life* (New York: Ray Long and Richard R. Smith). Used by permission.

had so little of Christ. To lose the Bible in any nation is to pave the way for the ascendancy of paganism.

Christian education might reduce paganism and increase Christianity. This is what happened in the first century. Jesus taught a few people to understand their relation to God. He sent them out to teach others and they went diligently about their Father's business. Christian schools were started and in due time the influence of paganism began to wane. It could not stand before the advance of Christian education.

Paganism threatens to overwhelm America because the Bible has become a lost Book. Its message is lost to the masses. They are not enrolled in the church schools. Many of them receive no religious instruction at home and the great majority have never had proper opportunity for spiritual development. They think and act in terms of things and not in terms of spiritual ideals. Shall we blame them? No, we must not blame them. We should pity them. They have been taught only about things and they do not know the spiritual ideals of Christ. They would respond to his appeal, if they could only know him.

Ellwood points out the seriousness of the situation. "*Our civilization*," he says, "*can no longer remain half pagan and half Christian*. It must soon become one or the other. We have come to the parting of the ways. Unless the world becomes speedily Christian, it is bound to become speedily pagan."⁸ The time has come for action. Public education is already far in advance of religious education. The Bible has a message for the masses and paganism cannot live in the light of its glowing truth. The Protestant church ought to give the Bible to the masses.

If the Bible should be lost! This seems unthinkable, but we should face the facts. The Bible is lost to any child, or youth, who does not receive a meaningful interpretation of its message of truth. Christian education might redeem America from advancing paganism if the church were able to give the Bible to the masses. The Bible would acquaint the people with Jesus and that marvelous revelation would help every child to find his Father. The Bible has made good its claims in every age of the past. *It must not be lost in the twentieth century.*

⁸ Ellwood, Charles A., *op. cit.*, p. 117.

CHAPTER X

Protestantism's Opportunity

GO Teach,”¹ said Jesus, and his disciples took him at his word. They carried his message to all parts of the Roman world and pagan peoples marveled at its wonderful transforming power. These first Christian teachers left a record of their Master’s message in the Christian Bible. They also started schools and in these schools thousands of people were taught to understand their true relation to God and to each other. In course of time, the influence of this message was felt in the highest levels of society and the proud Roman Empire accepted the principles of the lowly teacher of Nazareth.

The time came when the whole of Europe was engulfed in war. Wild barbarian tribes poured into the Empire seeking to plunder and to destroy. These invasions lasted for hundreds of years and the effect was so terrible that civilization was almost destroyed. Christian schools were closed and they remained closed to the masses for a thousand years. Ignorance and superstition set-

¹ Matthew 28:19

tled down upon the continent. The Bible was lost and the people groped in darkness and despair. They had no true revelation to guide them in their search after God. They walked in darkness because the true light of the world had gone out.

A thousand years passed and Europe grew restless. Brave men began to express strong opposition to existing conditions and they began to look for new sources of light. They began to study the Bible and to compare the original manuscripts with the teachings of the church. They soon discovered that the church had wandered far from the teachings of its Founder. The more they studied the Bible and the progress of the church in the first century, the more they were impressed with the power of the Christian message. They felt very sure that Europe might again be uplifted and free if the masses could only hear the message of Christ.

These modern prophets of God plunged deeply into their studies. They mastered the Greek and Hebrew languages and made translations of the Bible from the original into the language of the common people. Schools were organized and thousands of people were taught to read the Bible. They were inspired by its message. They came

to see new meaning in life. The common man received a new sense of personal worth and was inspired to struggle for freedom and self-expression. The movement spread rapidly and it was not long until large groups were organized in the interest of attaining freedom. These groups met opposition on every hand but they met it bravely. They had received from the Bible such a vision of light, hope, and liberty, that they could not easily be discouraged. They were so anxious to attain personal freedom and to give the Bible to others that they did not hesitate to face untold difficulties in an effort to find new homes in a far off land across the sea.

When these friends of the Bible first came to America, they took due regard that its message of truth should be taught to their own children. They taught it also to the savage people who lived in this fair land. They organized schools and, for almost two hundred years, the Bible occupied a central place in all schools in America. The founders of this great nation were free to recognize its value. They knew that the foundation principles upon which this nation was established had come from the Bible.

When the nation was founded, there were many different interpretations of the Bible and religion. The founders saw to it that the government should forever guard the freedom of conscience and the freedom of religion. No law can ever be passed which may deprive minority groups of these fundamental rights. It is even considered that these rights are so sacred that the government should not assume responsibility to teach the Bible or religion in its schools. To do so would work against individual freedom and might in time lead to the establishment of a State religion. The government has always been friendly toward religion but it has steadfastly maintained that it would be unwise to adopt any policy which might influence the religious thinking of a single individual. The government assumes that the church has priority in all matters pertaining to religion.

When the several states began to organize public schools, the question was brought up as to what place religion would occupy in these schools. Religion had held a central place in all schools for centuries but these schools had been church schools, or private schools under church influence. When state schools were organized, their leaders felt that to include religion would endanger the principle

of religious freedom. The struggle was prolonged and bitter, but it was finally assumed that religion could occupy no place in organized public education. It was held that the church, being responsible for the promotion of religion, should also be responsible for religious education. This decision inaugurated a new educational policy. The state accepted the responsibility to teach everything except religion, and religion, if taught at all, must be taught by the church.

The friends of religious education have expressed considerable alarm over the manner in which this decision has been carried out. They are highly pleased with the accomplishments of the state. The state has extended its schools so that they now reach a very large per cent of the people. The school term has been lengthened and general efficiency has been improved all along the line. The public schools are now so efficient that they are well able to leave their impress upon the masses. They mold the thinking of the rising generation, and in large measure, they determine what the next generation is to be. They do not teach religion. Will it make a difference if religion is allowed to pass from the thinking of the masses?

Religion has played its part well in human experience. It has provided ideals for progress and achievement. The very highest moral and spiritual ideals came from Jesus and they are recorded in the Bible. It will make a difference if the Bible should be lost. It will mean that the ideals of Jesus will be lost to the person who knows nothing of the Bible. It will deprive a person of the highest ethical standards and will result in low and shallow living. It will cripple one's outlook on life. Without the aid of these great Christian ideals, it will be difficult for a person to press on toward the goal. There will be no goal. Without the ideals of Jesus, man will descend toward the plane of the brute. He will live like an animal and will come to his end in gloom and despair and without hope for the future.

Already, statesmen and sociologists are alarmed at the shocking increase in crime. We shudder and wonder how America has come to such a plight. Two thousand kidnappings in two years is not pleasant to contemplate! We tremble when we know the facts, but friends of the church ought to look squarely at the picture. It is a dark picture of theft, murder, suicide, adultery, gang warfare and a host of other crimes. How did America

come to such a state? Can it be possible that the reversal of emphasis in education and the consequent failure of the church to impress the masses with the ideals of Jesus, has had anything to do with the situation?

Protestant churchmen should study the educational record of the church during the last one hundred years. It has been a brilliant record at many points, but the study should be directed to the accomplishments of the church in its efforts to reach the masses. This study should include the present Sunday church schools and all other church schools which are designed to reach the masses. This system of church schools should be compared with the present system of public schools. Comparison should be made in the amount of time available in the two systems, in number of pupils reached, in equipment, in curriculum, in leadership and general effectiveness. Such a study ought to throw light upon the major problem of this discussion. Is there danger that the Bible may be lost? Is there anything which the Protestant church may do to remove that danger and preserve the message of the Bible for the children of the future?

Protestants ought to be capable of learning a lesson from the past. We know what Christian

education accomplished in the first and second centuries. Teachers of religion today do not have to face half the problems which perplexed those first Christian teachers. We know what Christian education accomplished at the time of the Reformation and in colonial America. We have the same Bible and the same Christian ideals which have inspired a countless number of Christians in the past. We have children who are just as eager and just as *hungry for religion* as any children who have ever heard the message of Christ. They are just as impressionable and they will respond to the lure of the message if they are given the opportunity.

What is Protestantism's opportunity? The answer to this question should be sought in the light of Protestantism's supreme task and the needs of youth. The supreme task of Protestantism is to guarantee that children may have opportunity to develop a vital, living faith in a personal God, as revealed in Jesus Christ. This sacred obligation may be partly discharged by providing opportunity for children to study the Bible. Protestants gave the open Bible to the world after it had been closed for a thousand years. Protestants now have the task of keeping the Bible before

the children of the twentieth century. It can be done, and not only for the sake of religion, but for the sake of democracy, morality, and civilization, it ought to be done. Protestantism holds the opportunity and Protestantism ought not to fail.

We turn now to a brief discussion of certain constructive forward steps which Protestant churches ought to consider, if they have serious regard for the continuance of the open Bible and for the continuance of its influence in modern society.

ENLIGHTENED PUBLIC SENTIMENT

Protestantism ought to undertake to create enlightened public sentiment with regard to the need of improved opportunities for religious education. Improvement along any line will not begin until a sufficient number of people come to see the need of improvement. We need only to look to the field of public education for illustration. When the writer was ready to go to high school there were no high schools in his county. A representative of the State Board of Education came to his home community to address a mass meeting of citizens on the problem of establishing a high school in the community. The speaker

even offered to bring in a substantial portion of the required funds from the outside, if the people would only undertake the project. They would not accept the offer of outside funds to build a high school in the community. They were perfectly satisfied with their two-room school and could not see the need of a better school. Gradually public sentiment became more favorable and ten years later these same people built their own school with their own money.

Educational propaganda started public education on the upward road toward progress. Thousands of conventions were held and able speakers warned the people of the perils of illiteracy. These speakers showed that illiteracy tends to undermine patriotism and break down democracy. Gradually, the people began to be convinced, and were willing to spend a little money and make a start toward public school improvement. It was not long until a majority of the citizens were convinced that money spent for schools always pays the largest possible dividends. When they once saw the need of public education, they were ready to do anything possible to improve its efficiency.

The Protestant church should undertake to convince its constituency of the peril of religious

illiteracy. All friends of the church should be helped to understand that religious illiteracy works against Christian patriotism. A person will not make much sacrifice for an institution if he is almost wholly ignorant of that institution's mission and function in the world. Let the Protestant church face its task courageously and let it undertake to enlighten the people concerning the great need of religious education. Let the church keep working at this task until church members are made to see that religious education must be raised to the approximate level of public education. When this is done, the Bible will be safe and the church will enter a new period of glorious achievement.

This movement to enlighten public sentiment should permeate all levels of church organization. It should begin in the national church boards of education and it should extend to every local church. Ministers and lay leaders in local churches should compare their own educational work with the work of public schools in the same community. How can the church expect boys and girls to maintain proper respect for the Bible and religion, if the church schools are less efficient than the public schools?

INTERPRET EDUCATIONAL AIMS

Protestantism has given too little attention to the formulation of definite and specific educational aims. Stating the situation in very general terms, the aim has frequently had to do with the preservation of bodies of knowledge, rather than with the attainment of definite goals in character. Education has too often been divorced from life situations and has been thought of in terms of knowledge, rather than in terms of religious and social experience.

The church should help children and youth to reproduce in daily conduct all of the principles which Jesus lived and taught. Certainly, they must be made acquainted with his noble life and lofty teaching. This will require that the church teach the Bible but the aim should be directed toward the practical art of living. Religious education should always strive for complete realization in conduct of the great ideals of Christ.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The time has come to put first things first. Jesus recognized the priority of education when

he said, "Go ye therefore and teach."² The Protestant church of the Reformation gave education first place in its program. The colonial church in America made education first. Why should not the modern church learn a lesson from the past?

It is encouraging to note that the several Protestant groups are becoming more keenly conscious of their educational responsibility. Progress is being made along many lines but it can hardly be said that the major objective of the church is the religious education of the masses in America. The church still spends most of its money on other phases of work. It still tries to operate its program on the basis of a membership which is to a large extent religiously illiterate. The whole program is retarded because of the *drag, or back pull*, of many who know so little and care so little about the success of the enterprise. If the church desires to win, it should make religious education its major objective. Why not be willing to trust the method of Jesus? It has always worked in the past and if seriously tried, it will accomplish equally great things today.

² Matthew 28:19.

BEGIN WITH THE HOME

The home is the oldest religious institution and it is also the oldest and best educational institution. Why should not the church make larger use of the home in connection with its educational work?

The church has a two-fold opportunity in connection with its work in the home. It may bring the home to the church and it may take the church to the home. Both methods may be used with good results. It is important that members of the home attend the services of the church, and it is equally important that church workers visit and inspire the home. We sometimes criticize parents for their failure to teach religion in the home. The criticism might better be directed to the church. Many parents are greatly concerned and they would teach religion if they had been trained for the task. They cannot do well what they do not know how to do.

Consider the possible results for religious education if the Protestant church should seriously undertake to train parents to become teachers of religion in the home. Suppose the church should only be able to impress parents with a sense of responsibility for this important work. They

would then exert themselves to prepare themselves better to discharge this responsibility. Suppose church colleges and local church schools should undertake to train Christian young people for the duties of parenthood and home building. Suppose the average parent was even as well prepared to teach religion in the home as the average person who teaches religion in the church school. Would not such a condition greatly augment the work which is now being done? It would help to usher in a new day for the church.

The Bible is lost to many young people because it is first lost in the home. It is exceedingly difficult for a church school to overcome the negative influence of the home. If the Bible is not appreciated and wisely used in the home, it will be very difficult for church school teachers to impress their pupils with the value of its message. The church owes the home every possible assistance in providing more thorough religious education for children. This problem should receive attention from the various educational boards. These boards might well prepare definite outlines for use in the home, including family worship, use of the Bible and other religious activities. The home is

the very best educational institution. It ought no longer escape serious attention from the church.

IMPROVE THE SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOLS

The Protestant church has claimed that most of its new members come from those who have been taught in the Sunday church schools. This claim constitutes the very best testimony concerning the value of the Sunday School. It has been powerless to prevent widespread religious illiteracy but it has furnished most of the new members for the church. The best testimony to the value of Christian teaching is to be found in a study of the results of the church's meager educational program. If the church is looking for better results, why should it not improve and extend the work of the institution which has been its greatest strength?

Progress is being made toward improving the Sunday church school. There are many favorable signs, and leaders should be encouraged to do more in the future than they have ever done in the past. The Sunday church school ought to reach more people, and it will reach more people if local leaders organize to extend its work to the home. It can never give the masses a thorough religious education, but it is worth improving. It has

entirely justified itself and with such improvement as may be possible, it will continue to be worthy of a place in the church's educational program.

IMPROVED CURRICULUM

We have repeatedly emphasized the value of the Bible in religious education but we would not limit the curriculum of the church school to the Bible. Indeed, we no longer think of curriculum in terms of so much material to be mastered. We think, rather, of experience and we have come to include in the curriculum of religious education any experience which may aid the pupils to express in conduct the fundamental aims, or goals of education.

The Bible will have a large place in the curriculum but it will always be used for the definite purpose of assisting pupils to express the Christ spirit in daily conduct. The teacher will be free to use any materials or any projects which may aid in changing the pupil from what he is to what he ought to be. The improved curriculum will give a large place to worship and to various expressional activities. It will recognize that educational progress consists not so much in knowing as in doing. It will aim to make the Bible live in

practical life rather than in the memory of the pupil.

This improved curriculum will make the Bible more meaningful and more helpful than ever before. Pupils will learn to treasure the Bible because of its practical value in every day experience and not simply because it has been called the greatest Book in the world. The new type of curriculum will be thoroughly graded and adapted to a wide range of life interests and needs. The whole emphasis will be on the practical art of living. It will seek to mold character in complete harmony with the ideals and standards of Jesus.

CHRISTIAN COOPERATION

The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking in London in 1880, on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the Sunday School, challenged the Protestant forces of the world with these significant words:

“We are right to use every means in our power to unite Christians together in one great undertaking to advance the cause of Christ. We have too many separations among Christians. I desire that this great Christian country should maintain its Chris-

tianity, and that all who love the author of Christianity should join hand in hand. I rejoice, on this great occasion, in the center of this great city, that we should have this opportunity of uniting for the maintenance of our common Christianity.”⁸

For the maintenance of our common Christianity! Yes, this is sufficient reason why all Protestant forces ought to cooperate in one great undertaking to advance the cause of Christ. Christianity is imperiled by religious illiteracy. The Bible may even be lost to the masses if Protestants fail to improve the opportunities for religious education. Protestants do not fully agree on all matters of interpretation, but the points on which they do agree far outnumber the points on which they disagree. They all agree that the Bible contains the true revelation of God and all Protestant groups agree that the message of the Bible ought to be interpreted to the masses. Likewise, Protestant groups express deep regret at the present status of religious education. They agree that many more people ought to be reached and they all agree that existing church schools ought to

⁸ As quoted in *Minutes of the Virginia Sunday School Convention* held at Petersburg, 1882.

be greatly improved. Why should not all Protestant groups unite heartily in an educational movement to preserve those values concerning which, they all agree? If minor differences keep them apart much longer, it may mean the passing of those values which are basic and accepted by all as a part of our common Christianity.

Progress is being made in cooperative religious education, but progress seems slow in view of the peril of religious illiteracy. The chief problems of cooperation have now shifted to the local community. The denominations cooperate splendidly through the International Council of Religious Education and through many of the State Councils, but on the local field, many churches prefer to go alone. This is most regrettable for the local field is where the need exists. Children are growing to maturity without adequate opportunities for religious education. They are attending consolidated high schools, but they go every one to his own little church school. This is beside the truth, for many do not go at all—they stay away because they have little respect for the program which the churches offer. Surely, the young people of today do not understand why the churches should not

cooperate heartily in a program of religious education for all the people in the community.

Ministers and lay leaders on the local field should ponder well the meaning of the situation. Common values are at stake. The forces of evil are united but the church is divided. The churches ought to be willing to cooperate in every possible way to preserve those values for which each group has so long contended.

ENLARGED PROGRAM

When the Sunday School movement was finally accepted by the church, it certainly was not the thought of the leaders that it would be adequate to give Protestants a complete religious education. The Sunday School was introduced to meet an emergency. It came soon after education first began to turn away from the Bible and religion. Educational policies were then unsettled and they remained unsettled for three quarters of a century. Those who introduced the Sunday School were deeply concerned about religious education. They looked upon the Sunday School as a new opportunity to retrieve some of the losses which had already begun to be manifest in various phases of church work.

The story of what happened is well known. As the nineteenth century progressed, the state gradually assumed responsibility for general education and the church began to depend more and more on the Sunday School as its principal agency for religious education. In time, the church looked to the Sunday School to accomplish, *during one hour of one day a week*, the task which had once been the aim and purpose of all education. Happily for the church, the time came when church leaders recognized that the Sunday School had been given an *impossible task* and they began to look for additional agencies for education.

Early in the twentieth century, church leaders began to promote vacation church schools. Many of these schools were modeled after the public schools. They met in churches from two to six weeks during the summer vacation. They gathered children from far and near and taught them the Bible and basic principles of Christianity. The teachers were usually well trained and the schools were real schools of religion. As would be expected, the results were most encouraging. The schools were popular with ministers, laymen, and children. The church had at last discovered a new and practical agency for religious education.

A decade later, church leaders began to organize schools which met on week days during the regular school year. They felt that religion was of sufficient importance that it deserved a place in the child's regular program. It was not long until churches began to ask the public school authorities to grant *released time*, so that children might be excused from public schools to receive religious instruction by the churches. In many communities, the public school authorities readily granted *released time*, and expressed complete willingness to cooperate with the churches in any feasible plan to provide more adequate religious education for the children.

The vacation and week day school movements have now spread to all parts of the country. Many schools are held every year but only a beginning has been made. The week day school is more comprehensive in scope, and under ideal conditions, it offers many advantages over the vacation school. On the other hand, vacation schools can be successfully operated in many communities where it would not be easy to launch regular week day schools of religion. The Protestant church has large opportunity in both types of schools. The church should look to gen-

eral expansion and improvement in vacation and week day schools. The Bible and religion may be saved in any community which will seriously take advantage of these opportunities.

PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION

The enlarged program of religious education will require a new type of supervision. Indeed, one of the notable defects in Protestant religious education has been in the lack of supervision. The local churches of a denomination have been so widely scattered that the denomination has not been able to provide an ample supply of trained supervisors. There have been specialists and supervisors but, for the most part, they have remained in the offices of the national or area boards of education. They have not usually been available to live with the people whom they desire to serve and, consequently, their ministry as supervisors has not been very effective.

The Protestant church must find a way to supply professional supervision on the local field, if it desires to provide a more adequate program of religious education. The public school has long recognized the value of close supervision of professionally trained teachers. How much more

should the church recognize the value of close supervision of voluntary teachers? This is an imperative need. The Protestant church must find a way to provide close supervision for its educational work.

This problem is greatly simplified if it is approached on the cooperative basis. The Protestant churches of many cities are now employing competent supervisors or directors of religious education. In the larger cities, these directors have the assistance of a staff of highly trained leaders. These supervisors give their whole time to serving the churches of the particular city. They hold institutes and training schools. They give special help to Sunday School superintendents and to other officers. They assist churches in improving their educational organization and in adopting new types of curricula. They are also available for directing and supervising vacation and week day schools of religion.

Professional supervision on the cooperative basis is now being extended to the rural field. An interesting experiment has come under the observation of the writer where three counties have jointly employed a Director of Religious Education. She is as well trained as any public edu-

tional leader in either county, having had three years of graduate training in religious education. This person *lives with the church workers of her area*. She directs and supervises week day and vacation schools. She directs various types of young people's work and does everything possible to improve religious education. She is helping the churches to uphold the *dignity and worth of the Bible* for she is helping them to lift the level of religious education until it is approaching the level of public education.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Religious education demands a trained leadership. By this, we do not mean that every officer and teacher in the local church will have to be a college trained man or woman. We mean, simply, that every person who serves in the church school will have to understand his job and be able to do a piece of work which will compare favorably with the work of the public schools. Consecrated volunteer workers can prepare themselves to render splendid service in the church school. The church must depend upon them and the church owes them every possible opportunity for improvement.

The responsibility for providing a trained leadership rests heavily upon the minister. He is supposed to appreciate better than any one else the value of the Christian message. He is the employed servant of the church and the church has a right to expect him to lead the church school to new levels of efficiency. If a local church is not making progress in leadership training, the cause very probably rests with the minister. If he is not sufficiently interested in education that he will take time to study and plan for the improvement of his church school, it is very doubtful if any group of laymen will take the matter seriously. The local church must look to the minister to lead the way in all phases of leadership training.

We cannot discuss at length the various leadership training agencies. The value of regular training classes in the local church should not be overlooked. The cooperative community school offers a splendid opportunity to all churches which are willing to share responsibility with others in this important matter. Another valuable agency is the denominational and interdenominational summer camps and training schools. A good worker's library and a generous supply of religious education magazines are indispensable in leader-

ship training. Happy is that church which uses the agencies which are easily available.

Leadership training will give vision and technique. "Where there is no vision the people perish."⁴ They never will acquire technique and skill if they lack vision. The church must first impress its leaders with the supreme worth of the Christian message and with a keen sense of the responsibility which falls upon those who undertake to teach it to children. Having done this, it must then provide appropriate agencies in which leaders may take the training which they need.

CONCLUSION

We close as we began. *The Bible has brought untold blessings to the world. It has brought man face to face with his Maker.* It has wrought far-reaching changes in all avenues of experience. It is now in danger of being lost to the masses. No one can tell positively what would happen if its influence should be entirely lost to *one-half, or three-fourths*, or more, of the youth of America. We know only what happened in many ages of the past, where its light shone so dimly that the people could not find God. We have full knowledge of

⁴Proverbs 29:18

what is happening now. God forbid that the Bible should be lost! Its light will shine more brightly, than ever in the past, if Protestantism will build a comprehensive educational program for the children and youth of America. *Protestantism holds the key to this inspiring opportunity, and Protestantism ought not to fail!*

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